# CITY HILIGHTS

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# No date fixed on Karnataka leadership change, says Kharge

## Cong president says leadership decisions will be taken collectively after detailed consultations

**KALABURAGI**

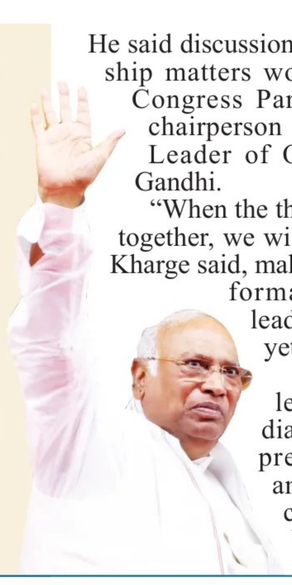
Amid continuing speculation over a possible leadership change in Karnataka, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday clarified that no date has been fixed to discuss the issue and said any decision would be taken collectively by the party high command.

The remarks come against the backdrop of growing reports of a power tussle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar within the Karnataka Congress.

Speaking to reporters, Kharge said the Congress leadership follows a detailed consultative process before arriving at any major political decision.

**Leadership Buzz in Karnataka**

Speculation over Karnataka leadership has intensified ahead of the Congress government completing half its term. Supporters of D K Shivakumar have openly backed a leadership transition, while Siddaramaiah has maintained that he intends to continue as Chief Minister for the full five-year tenure unless directed otherwise by the party high command.



He said discussions related to leadership matters would involve him, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi.

"When the three of us fix a date together, we will take a decision," Kharge said, making it clear that no formal discussion on leadership change has yet been scheduled.

He cautioned party leaders and the media against misinterpreting his remarks and stressed that no conclusion should be drawn until the high command officially takes a decision. Kharge also underlined that any eventual decision regarding Karnataka leadership would be made keeping the interests of the state and the party in mind. He added that once a decision is taken by the high command, it would have to be accepted and supported by all leaders and workers in the party.

Political speculation over a possible change in leadership has intensified in recent weeks amid claims of a power-sharing arrangement in the Karnataka Congress government. Supporters of Shivakumar have repeatedly hinted at a possible transition, while Siddaramaiah has maintained that he intends to complete a full five-year term as Chief Minister.

# Centre burdening citizens with LPG price hike: DK Shivakumar

**Deputy CM says repeated commercial LPG hikes are hurting small businesses and consumers.**

**BENGALURU**

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday criticised the Union government over the steep increase in commercial LPG cylinder prices, alleging that the Centre was placing an unfair financial burden on ordinary citizens and small businesses.

Reacting to the latest revision in commercial LPG rates, Shivakumar said the cost of a 19-kg cylinder in Bengaluru had risen sharply to Rs 3,152 after an increase of nearly Rs 991 in a single day.

Addressing reporters at the KPCC office, he accused the Centre of repeatedly increasing the prices of essential commodities, including fuel, fertilisers and cooking gas, thereby affecting middle and lower-income groups.

Shivakumar said this was the third major LPG price hike in recent months and warned that the increase would trigger a rise in food prices across hotels and eateries.

He noted that small hotels, roadside vendors and local food businesses were already struggling to cope with rising operational expenses and may now be forced to increase menu prices to survive.

The Deputy Chief Minister also mocked the Centre's policies, saying rising LPG costs were pushing people back towards traditional cooking methods using firewood instead of clean energy alternatives.

His remarks come amid indications from the Bengaluru Hotel Association that food prices could rise by around 10 per cent due to mounting input costs.

Shivakumar further urged Union Ministers from Karnataka to respond to the concerns of traders, hoteliers and common citizens affected by fluctuating fuel prices.

"The Central government always puts the burden on the common man."

—D.K.Shivakumar, Deputy CM

# Karnataka orders twin probes into Bowring Hospital wall collapse

**BENGALURU**

The Karnataka government has constituted two inquiry committees to investigate the tragic compound wall collapse at Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital in Bengaluru that claimed seven lives following heavy rains earlier this week.

The government has directed both committees to submit their findings within a week amid mounting criticism over civic negligence and poor infrastructure maintenance in the city.

The first committee, headed by the Deputy Commissioner of Bengaluru Urban district, will conduct an administrative inquiry into the incident. The Yelahanka Tehsildar has been appointed as a member of the panel.

In addition, a separate technical experts committee has been formed to determine the exact structural reasons behind the collapse of the hospital's compound wall. The committee will be headed by retired Public Works Department Chief Engineer Mohan K, while the Chief Engineer (Buildings), PWD, will serve as member secretary.

- Death toll: 7
- Committees formed: 2
- Report deadline: 1 week
- Location: Bowring & Lady Curzon Hospital, Bengaluru
- Technical panel head: Mohan K, retired PWD Chief Engineer

Other members include senior engineers from the Public Works Department's quality control, planning and subdivision wings.

The Terms of Reference for the committees include examining when the wall was constructed, whether maintenance was carried out as per norms, if nearby construction activity weakened the structure, and whether the wall had exceeded its structural lifespan. The incident occurred amid intense rainfall across Bengaluru, which has exposed vulnerabilities in ageing civic infrastructure and triggered public outrage over safety standards in government premises.

# Congress doing vote-bank politics over Muslim grants: R. Ashoka

**BENGALURU**

Accusing the Congress of selective appeasement, Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka said the party, which claims to support "equal share for all," is extending special grants only to Muslims while ignoring Dalits and backward communities.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru on May 1, Ashoka alleged that the Congress is indulging in vote-bank politics and claimed that growing dissatisfaction among Muslims in Davanagere had triggered internal political action within the ruling party.

He said Hindus would respond strongly to such policies. Targeting the Congress leadership, Ashoka referred to AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge's recent temple-related participation and said it had triggered political discussions about a possible leadership change in Karnataka.

He said while earlier there was speculation that Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar would become Chief Minister, attention was now shifting towards Kharge.

He further remarked that instead of a change in leadership, it would be better if the government itself collapsed.

Referring to internal differences between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, he said the situation had already turned into a "political drama" and added that any new leadership development would also be closely watched.

"Hindu voters will give a strong reply to this selective appeasement politics being followed by the Congress."

—R. Ashoka, Leader of Opposition

# TVK Office Set Ablaze in TN Ahead of Counting Day

**CHENNAI**

Tension gripped Tamil Nadu's Srirangam after a local office of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) was vandalised and partially set on fire late Thursday night, just days before Assembly election counting scheduled for May 4.

According to police, CCTV footage from the area captured two unidentified men arriving near the office, entering the premises and leaving shortly afterwards. By Friday morning, party posters and banners featuring TVK chief and actor-turned-politician Vijay were found damaged and torn outside the office.

Police officials said no injuries were reported and the damage caused by the fire appeared limited. "It is a small office and the loss seems minimal. We suspect two individuals were involved and are investigating how the fire was started," a police official from Srirangam said.

Authorities added that no formal case has been registered yet as the party had not filed an official complaint till Friday evening.

The incident comes amid heightened political activity and growing anticipation over the election results. Several exit polls have predicted a strong performance for TVK in its electoral debut, increasing political excitement across the state.

Party leaders have also intensified vigilance ahead of counting day. TVK candidate N Marie Wilson said Vijay had instructed all party candidates to remain present at counting centres from early morning and closely monitor the counting process until completion.

Tamil Nadu voted in a single phase on April 23, recording a voter turnout of 85.14 percent. Counting of votes will be taken up on May 4.

# Tight security at Bengal counting centres ahead of May 4 results

**KOLKATA**

Security has been intensified across counting centres in West Bengal ahead of the May 4 Assembly election results, with Central Armed Police Forces and state police maintaining strict vigil over Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) strong rooms.

Authorities said elaborate arrangements have been put in place at key counting centres, including Khudiram Anushilan Kendra in Kolkata, to ensure the integrity and transparency of the counting process amid heightened political tensions.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee visited an EVM strong room at Sakhawat Memorial School in Bhabanipur after receiving complaints of alleged irregularities

Speaking to reporters, Banerjee warned against any attempt to manipulate the counting process and stressed that people's votes must be safeguarded.

West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Agarwal dismissed allegations of tampering, stating that strong rooms remain under round-the-clock CCTV surveillance and are being continuously monitored by authorised personnel.

**Repoll ordered in 15 booths in WB today**

The Election Commission has ordered repolling in 15 polling stations across two Assembly constituencies in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district following reports of alleged irregularities during voting. The repoll will be held today between 7 am and 6 pm. Of the 15 booths, 11 fall under Magrahat Paschim constituency and four under Diamond Harbour constituency, where polling was conducted during the second phase of the Assembly elections on April 29. The Commission said the decision was based on reports from returning officers and election observers, along with "material circumstances" that required fresh polling to ensure free and fair elections. The BJP had alleged large-scale irregularities in certain booths under Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha constituency, represented by TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee. Following the complaints, the Election Commission deployed special observer Subrata Gupta to examine the situation on the ground.

# Iran Reportedly Sends Fresh Proposal to US Through Pak Amid Gulf Tensions

**NEW DELHI**

Iran has reportedly sent a fresh proposal for negotiations with the United States through Pakistani mediators as tensions continue in the Gulf region amid the ongoing Iran-US-Israel conflict.

According to Iranian state media, the proposal was conveyed in an effort to revive diplomatic engagement and reduce regional instability. The development comes even as military tensions remain high around the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial global oil shipping route.

Meanwhile, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said a proposed US-led coalition aimed at reopening the Strait of Hormuz would complement existing French and British maritime security efforts rather than compete with them. The United Arab Emirates also expressed concern over navigation security in the Gulf. UAE presidential advisor Anwar Gargash said unilateral Iranian assurances regarding safe passage through Hormuz could not be fully trusted. Iran activated air defence systems on Friday to counter suspected drone and small aircraft threats.

**DRUG CARTEL CRACKDOWN**

# *Hidden in cricket gear, cocaine worth Rs 1,745 crore seized*

**MUMBAI**

In one of the biggest drug busts in recent years, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has seized 349 kg of high-grade cocaine worth around Rs 1,745 crore from multiple locations in the Mumbai region.

The cocaine was cleverly hidden inside cricket pads and gloves, exposing a sophisticated international narcotics network operating through warehouses and transport hubs.

The operation, codenamed White Strike, was conducted after more than six months of surveillance and intelligence gathering. Acting on specific inputs, NCB teams raided locations in the Kalamboli–Bhiwandi logistics corridor across Navi Mumbai and Thane.

The first seizure was made after officials intercepted a goods vehicle near the KWC Warehousing Complex in Kalamboli. During inspection, officers found 136 packets of cocaine weighing one kilogram each concealed inside cartons containing cricket equipment. One accused was arrested from the spot.

Based on information obtained during interrogation, NCB officials carried out another raid at a warehouse in Bhiwandi's Rehnal village, recovering an additional 213 packets of cocaine.

Officials said the drugs were hidden inside machine cavities imported into India and wrapped in multiple layers of polythene coated with greasy material to avoid detection. Investigators suspect the involvement of an organised transnational syndicate using warehouses and concealed transportation systems to distribute narcotics.

The agency is now trying to identify the masterminds, financiers, handlers and intended recipients linked to the consignment.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah praised the NCB for the successful operation and reiterated the Centre's commitment to eliminating drug networks. He described the seizure as a major breakthrough in India's fight against narcotics trafficking.

Authorities noted that annual cocaine seizures in India generally range between 200 and 300 kg, making this haul one of the country's largest ever recoveries.

**MASSIVE COCAINE HAUL**

- Total cocaine seized: 349 kg
- Estimated value: Rs 1,745 cr
- Hidden inside: Cricket pads and gloves
- Main locations: Kalamboli and Bhiwandi
- Operation codename: White Strike
- One accused arrested, investigation continues

"We are determined to ruthlessly crush narcotics cartels. This operation proves how intelligence-led investigations can dismantle large international drug trafficking networks operating in India."

Amit Shah, Home Minister

# May Day: Civic Workers felicitated in Mysuru

**MYSURU**

On the occasion of Labour Day, civic workers were honoured by Apoorva Sneha Balaga and Rang Rao & Sons at Chamundipuram in Mysuru in recognition of their dedicated service to society.

Considering the intense summer heat this season, the organisers distributed caps for head protection along with tea, buns, and bananas to the civic workers and conveyed Labour Day greetings to them.

Speaking on the occasion, Hotel Owners' Association President Narayanagowda said that the service of civic workers, who collect garbage and keep the city clean while protecting public health, is truly memorable and invaluable. These workers are the true servants of this country, and celebrating Labour Day in Mysuru in such a meaningful manner brings great happiness. "Even before most of us wake up, civic workers clean our surroundings and provide us with a beautiful and hygienic environment. They are the true environmentalists. If they stop cleaning even for a single day, the entire environment would lose its shape and cleanliness," he said.

Gowda said there is a long-standing demand for making civic workers permanent employees, and the government must seriously consider this issue. Earlier there was a perception that civic workers belonged to the lowest level of society, but that mindset has now changed. Today, they are living as part of the social mainstream with improved standards of living and dignity. Every civic worker should ensure good education for their children so that the next generation can lead a better life.

Those present on the occasion included K.R. Bank President Basavaraj Basappa, Apoorva Suresh, M.R.Suresh, CEO, Rang Rao & Sons' Suresh, former City Corporation member Jagadish, entrepreneur Jayaram, Health Officer Shivaprasad, Dhoora Rajanna, Anand, Myla Vijay Kumar, Jatti Prasad, Shivalinga Swamy, and several civic workers.

# "Workers are the backbone of the nation"

**MYSURU**

Labour Day was celebrated in a meaningful way by Legend Groups at the Golf Club premises in Mysuru, where workers themselves cut the cake to mark the occasion.

As part of the Labour Day celebrations, every worker employed at the Golf Club premises was honoured with clothes as a token of respect and appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

Speaking on the occasion, Legend Groups Chairman Surya Kumar said that just as farmers are considered the backbone of the country, workers too serve as the backbone of the nation through their relentless hard work.

He said that no field can achieve success without the contribution of workers.

"I too am the son of a worker. My father was an employee, and as his son, I was able to grow and reach this level in life," he said.

He further emphasized that if every worker gives greater importance to their children's education, those children can rise to higher positions in life and become IAS and IPS officers in the future.

He said that the younger generation must be made aware of the importance of education so that they can grow into responsible citizens of the country.

He also conveyed Labour Day greetings to all workers.

BJP leader B.P. Manjunath, K.A. Anil Kumar, S.K. Srinivas, K.K. Nandan, K.K. Naveen, and T.N. Shashikumar were present during the programme.

# Farmers hold strike in front of CESC in support of their demands

**MYSURU**

Members of the Mysuru taluk unit of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha staged a protest on Thursday demanding the fulfilment of various demands, including the supply of seven hours of uninterrupted electricity during daytime.

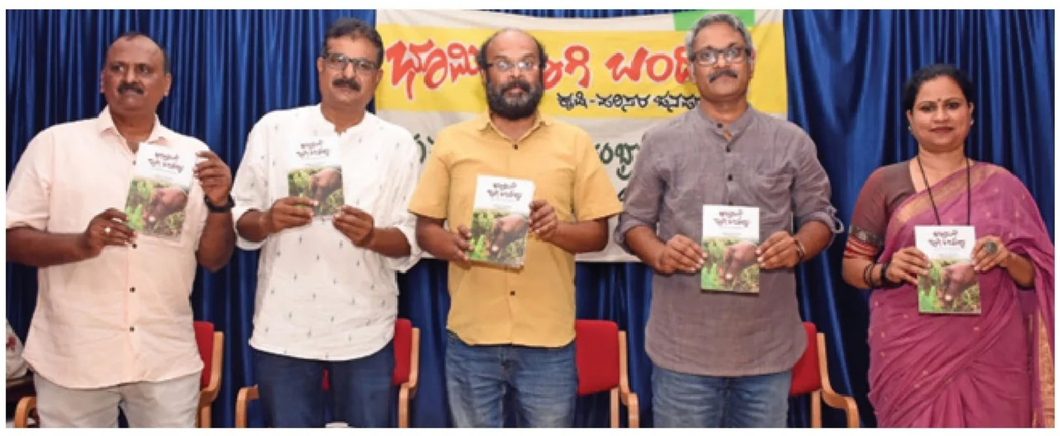
The office-bearers of the farmers' association held the protest in front of the headquarters of Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (CESC) at Vijayanagar 2nd Stage. They expressed dissatisfaction that the shortage of electricity was causing severe hardship to farmers, and inadequate power supply to agricultural pump sets had left them in distress. As a result, many crops were getting damaged. Since many farmers in rural areas are entirely dependent on agriculture, crop loss has pushed them into serious difficulties, they said.

They pointed out that if electricity is supplied during night hours, farmers are unable to go to their fields due to the menace of wild animals. Therefore, by government order, uninterrupted power supply for seven hours should be ensured during daytime. They also demanded that damaged transformers should be repaired within 24 hours. Priority should be given for installing solar systems for agricultural pump sets, and farmers who have already registered should be allowed to make payments, they urged.

They further demanded that electricity should not be privatized and must remain under government control. Leaning electricity poles and damaged wires should be repaired immediately. Protesters also insisted that agricultural pump sets should be regularized under the earlier system of legalisation of unauthorized connections and that the previous deposit rate should be continued.

Meanwhile, CESC Managing Director M.S. Archana arrived at the spot, listened to the grievances of the protesters, and accepted their memorandum of demands. On the occasion, CESC Mysuru Circle Superintending Engineer Sunil and Chief Engineer L. Lokesh were also present.

District President of the farmers' association Hosur Kumar, General Secretary Marankayya, Pai Venkatesh, Anandur Prabhakar, Mandakalli Mahesh and others participated in the protest.



# Children's minds must be nurtured to receive stories: Satish Tiptur

**MYSURU**

They are living in a peculiar phase. There is a growing concern that folk tales and traditional elements like ragi may be fading into relics of the past. When they think about how to engage today's children, it is evident that over 25% of urban children and even their parents believe that essentials like ragi, rice, and clothes simply come from stores, without realizing their connection to the soil, said Mysuru Rangayana Director Satish Tiptur.

Speaking at the release of the book "Bhoomige Ragi Bandaddu" (How Ragi Came to the Earth), held on April 19, 2026, at the Institution of Engineers hall in Mysuru, he said the key question is what ideas and narratives we should sow in young minds. The elders created stories to expand knowledge, and these have been passed down through generations. They must ensure that these stories reach children, and their minds must be made receptive to absorb them. This book is one such effort.

Speaking about the book, Dr. R. Santosh Nayak, Director of the Publications Division at Karnataka State Open University, said, most of them grew up listening to folk tales. However, today mythological narratives seem to dominate over folk traditions. There is an increasing tendency to link every person, place, or subject to mythology. While mythology often depicts unseen worlds and may not always connect closely to everyday life, folk tales directly reflect people's lived experiences and surroundings. That is why they feature animals, birds, common people, and natural elements like hills and landscapes.

He added that the 41 stories in the book help readers understand India's agricultural culture, philosophy, values, environmental awareness, and way of life. "It is crucial to document our oral traditions before they disappear," he emphasized.

One of the authors, G. Krishnaprasad, shared that the collection was made possible by traveling through villages. "In today's digital age, children must be encouraged to read such stories, and this is a book parents should also read," he said. Co-author Mallikarjuna Hosapalya explained how the book took shape.

Chief guest and Dharwad-based writer Roopa Machigani also addressed the gathering. During the interaction session, several participants shared their views.

Contributors who helped collect the stories were honored with copies of the book. Attendees enjoyed traditional foods like ragi vermicelli, coconut milk, and horse gram papad.

# Community halls must serve as cultural centres: MLC Dr Yathindra

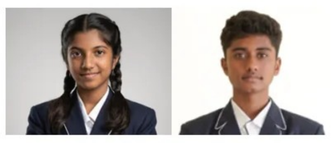
**MYSURU**

Community halls must evolve into vibrant cultural centres that cater to the social and cultural needs of rural people, said MLC Dr. Yathindra Siddaramaiah. He noted that such spaces are essential for hosting meetings, functions, ceremonies, and other community activities.

He was speaking after inaugurating a Valmiki community hall constructed at a cost of ₹80 lakh in Nagarle village of Varuna constituency, and performing the foundation ceremony for a Sri Rama temple being built at a cost of ₹40 lakh. He also inaugurated school rooms on the occasion.

The MLC said under the leadership of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, community halls are being constructed across villages in the constituency, enabling economically weaker sections to conduct events conveniently and at lower costs. He urged the public to make effective use of these facilities.

He further highlighted the development of temples and school infrastructure in villages, along with the implementation of government guarantee schemes, which have improved the quality of life for rural residents, especially women. Several local leaders and officials were present at the event.



# ICSE: Nypunya students shine

**MYSURU**

The students of 10th standard from Naipunya School of Excellence, R.T. Nagar, have achieved excellent results in the ICSE Class 10 examination, with the school securing a 100% pass percentage. The first batch of students of the school, which was established in the academic year 2022–23, passed with distinction and secured outstanding grades. Janavi Ramesh (96.4%) and Manas P (90.4%) emerged as the school toppers. The school Principal, Dechamma, and the management congratulated the successful students.

# "Mothers must teach Kannada values to kids at home"

**MYSURU**

Senior litterateur Siddanna Badagi of Mudhol called upon mothers to teach Kannada culture and values to their children from home itself.

Speaking as the chief president of Mysuru Sahitya Sambhrama-2, organized on Sunday at the District Kannada Sahitya Bhavan in Vijayanagar by Suvarna Karnataka Press Association in association with the District Kannada Sahitya Parishat, he said there is a saying that home is the first school and mother is the first teacher. Therefore, if a mother decides, Kannada values and culture can be nurtured at home.

Badagi said Mysuru is the spiritual and literary centre because Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar established the Kannada Sahitya Parishat and worked towards the growth of literature, culture, and art. However, poet Ranna became the pride of Kannada through just three literary works. People used to say, "Rannaniruva Kannadakke Baruvudunte Dhakke." Therefore, instead of saying Kannada should be developed, today we must say it should be preserved, he remarked.

He advised that poets must work as the conscience of society and help correct its shortcomings. One should never forget the debt owed to one's birthplace, society, and language. That does not mean we are against other languages, but there must be love and respect for Kannada.

District Kannada Sahitya Parishat President Maddikere Gopal, who presided over the programme, said that considering present-day developments, taking literature to the next generation itself has become a major challenge.

Chief guest T. Thyagaraju, District Kasapa Vice-President and KPTCL engineer who has donated blood 103 times, said that everyone must achieve something meaningful before death and thereby repay their debt to society.

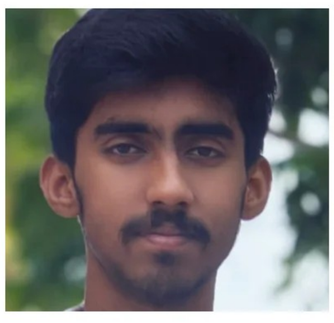
Another chief guest, artist Ravi Santu, said that one should never forget those who gave food, education, and shelter. He also performed mimicry in the voices of Shankar Nag, Ambareesh, and Dr. Rajkumar.

Senior journalist Amshi Prasannakumar inaugurated the programme. Nele Trust Treasurer M. Shilpa offered floral tribute to the portrait of Bhuvaneshwari. Vatsalya Seva Foundation President A.C. Ravikumar, Samarpana Seva Trust President Lion Kumar, Bengaluru environmentalist Dhanalakshmi, and progressive farmer Rajegowda were the chief guests. Shivakumar and Mahanthesh Chinna were present.

M.P. Manjunath welcomed the gathering. Institution founder Manjula Pavagada delivered the introductory speech. Nandadeepa compered the programme. Retired teacher Subbalakshmi offered the prayer.

Nihar Ankita Krishnadas presented Bharatanatyam, Siddaraju and team from Ramasamudra in Chamarajanagar performed Shiva Tandava dance, and Arun and Padma's team from Mysuru's Snehabharathi Bhajana Mandali rendered devotional songs.

Later, a seminar on the contribution of the Mysuru royal family to literature, a poets' meet, and a felicitation programme for achievers were held. Specially-abled persons and students who scored high marks in II PUC were also honoured.



# Niruth Anand secures 8th rank in SSLC exams

**MYSURU**

Niruth Anand, a student of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in the city, has passed the SSLC examination of this academic year with distinction by scoring 618 marks out of 625, securing the 8th rank in the state. He is the son of Anand and Shilpa of Vijayanagar.

He has scored 124 in Kannada, 99 in English, 100 in Hindi, 98 in Mathematics, 98 in Science and 99 in Social Science. In total, he has secured 618 marks as against the total 625 marks.

# Five couples tie the knot at free mass wedding

**MYSURU**

Five couples entered married life at the free mass wedding ceremony organized by the Karnataka Samsruthi and Sahitya Parishat at Geetha Mandira on Ashoka Road in the city.

The couples who got married were S.M. Likhith and Mamatha Swathi from Hassan district, B.T. Vijay and N. Soujanya from Bengaluru South district, S. Kanakamurthy and Anjali from Mysuru, G. Raju and S. Sangeetha, and Aishwarya and Kumar.

On behalf of the Parishat, the brides were presented with mangalya, toe rings, and sarees, while the grooms were given shirts, panche, and shawls. Sri Ilai Alwar Swamiji of Vangipura Nambimatha, Melukote, graced the occasion with his presence.

Former President of Karnataka State Government Employees Association H.K. Ramu, psychologist Dr. Rekha Manah Shanti, senior journalist Amshi Prasannakumar, Hare Srinivasa Committee President Gundu Venkateshkumar were the chief guests. Entrepreneur S. Venkatesh presided over the function.

The programme was held under the leadership of Karnataka Cultural and Literary Parishat President Kasturi Chandru. Office-bearers T. Shivaraju, Ameen Begum, Tejas Prithviraj, H.T. Parvathi, Nataraj, Nayana Harishchandra, Maulya Jaikumar, L. Roopa and others participated in the event.

MYSURU TAKES WING

# New Daily Hyderabad Flight Gives City's Air Connectivity a Major Boost

**MYSURU**

Mysuru Airport added a new feather to its cap on Friday with the grand inauguration of a new daily direct flight service between Mysuru and Hyderabad, significantly boosting regional connectivity and opening fresh avenues for tourism, trade and business travel.

The new service, launched under the revised Summer Schedule 2026, was formally flagged off at a colourful ceremony held at Mysuru Airport at 12 noon. The occasion was marked by the presence of Mysuru-Kodagu Member of Parliament Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, who inaugurated the service and described it as an important milestone in the city's growing aviation journey.

Joining him at the event was senior political leader and MLA G.T. Devegowda, along with airport officials, airline representatives and members of the aviation fraternity, making the occasion both significant and celebratory.

The newly introduced service will operate daily under flight numbers 6E7047 and 6E7048, offering convenient

afternoon schedules for both business and leisure passengers. Flight 6E7047 will depart from Hyderabad (HYD) at 12:10 pm and arrive in Mysuru (MYQ) at 2:00 pm every day, while Flight 6E7048 will leave Mysuru at 2:20 pm and reach Hyderabad at 4:00 pm, ensuring seamless same-day travel options for passengers.

The direct Hyderabad connection is expected to be a major advantage for Mysuru, linking the heritage city with one of India's leading IT, pharmaceutical and commercial hubs. Frequent travelers, entrepreneurs, students, tourists and professionals are likely to benefit immensely from the reduced travel time and improved convenience.

Speaking on the occasion, officials highlighted that the new route is not merely an addition of flights, but a strategic move towards strengthening Mysuru Airport's domestic network and positioning the city as a stronger regional aviation hub.

The enhanced connectivity is also expected to provide a strong boost to tourism, allowing easier access for visitors travelling to Mysuru's palaces, heritage landmarks and cultural attractions, while also encouraging smoother business exchanges between Karnataka and Telangana.

Airport authorities said the move reflects Mysuru Airport's continued commitment to expanding its regional footprint and supporting the economic growth of the region through stronger air connectivity.

With the launch of this new Hyderabad service, Mysuru Airport continues to emerge as an important gateway to Southern India, connecting tradition with progress and bringing the city closer to the skies than ever before.

# Buddha's teachings are a light to the world : ADC Aishwarya

**MYSURU**

Additional Deputy Commissioner R. Aishwarya said that the philosophies and teachings of Lord Buddha should not be confined to just one day of celebration, but must be adopted at every stage of life.

She was speaking after inaugurating the Buddha Jayanti celebrations organized at Karnataka Kalamandira by the District Administration, Kannada and Culture Department, Mysuru City Corporation, and the Bhagavan Buddha Jayanti Celebration Committee.

She said that Buddha was a great soul who gave the light of peace and wisdom to the entire world. Only by walking on the path of Dhamma shown by him can an equal and just society be built. Quoting the mantra, "From ignorance to knowledge, Asatoma Sadgamaya, Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya," she said that Buddha's teachings have the power to remove the darkness of ignorance and lead humanity towards the path of wisdom.

The ADC said that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, inspired by Buddha's principles, gave India an excellent Constitution and upheld the ideals of equality. It is the duty of all of them to walk on that path.

Referring to the "World Peace March" held before the program, she said that Buddha's message of peace is highly relevant in today's chaotic world.

She also mentioned that even when lakhs of people had gathered in Rajagriha to listen to Buddha's sermons, the silence and spiritual power prevailing there amazed the king of that time, thus demonstrating the importance of discipline and peace. "The light of Buddha's wisdom from nearly 2,500 years ago still shines brightly today. It is our responsibility to pass these teachings on to the next generation," she said.

Speaking on the occasion, Venerable Dr. Kalyanasiri Bhanteji of Vishwa Maitri Buddha Vihara said that peace can prevail in society only when every individual gives up anger, jealousy, and hatred within themselves. The path of non-violence shown by Buddha is extremely necessary for today's troubled world. Every person must follow the principles of Panchasheel to live a cultured life. Not lying, not engaging in violence, and staying away from alcohol enhance a person's dignity. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar conveyed Buddha's message of equality to Indians through Dhamma Deeksha. Society must come out of the tight grip of the caste system and develop a culture that respects humanity.

"Worshipping Buddha's idol is important, but bringing his thoughts into our behavior is equally important. Moving from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge is the true celebration of Buddha Jayanti," he said.

He added that developing the quality of seeing everyone as human beings without discrimination of caste or religion is the true devotion we can offer to Buddha.

"Buddha is not merely an individual, but a continuous flow of wisdom. More than placing Buddha's photo in our homes, we must place his principles in our hearts," he said.

"We do not need a war fought with weapons; instead, we need Buddha who wins people's hearts. Only through compassion and friendship can the world be changed," he added.

B. Gopal of Praja Parivartana Vedike said that Buddha's teachings are not limited to a religious framework; they are scientific and human values. Buddha's "intellectual revolution" is still necessary to uproot the superstitions deeply rooted in society.

Venerable Sobhana Bhanteji of Mahabodhi Branch, Joint Director of Kannada and Culture Department V.N. Mallikarjunaswamy, Assistant Director Dr. M.D. Sudarshan, former Mayor Purushotham, dignitaries Somayya Maliyuru, leaders of Bhagavan Buddha Jayanti Celebration Committee, and others were present at the program.

HIKE IN COMMERCIAL LPG CYLINDER PRICE

# Youth Congress activists stage stir in Mysuru

**MYSURU**

The Karnataka Pradesh Youth Congress members of Mysuru staged a stir at Ramaswamy Circle in Mysuru on Friday protesting against the sudden hike in the price of the commercial LPG cylinder cost by Rs 993 per cylinder.

Strong resentment was expressed against the steep increase in the price of commercial LPG cylinders, with Youth Congress leaders stating that the Central Government has imposed yet another financial burden on small traders, hotel owners, and the common public.

They pointed out that the Modi-led Central Government has once again increased the price of commercial gas cylinders to ₹993, which has added to the difficulties faced by small businesses and the hospitality sector.

According to them, the continuous rise in gas prices is weakening small-scale enterprises and forcing hotel owners to increase food prices, ultimately affecting the common man. They alleged that the government is ignoring the hardships faced by the public and has completely failed in controlling inflation.

They also stated that the heavy burden of taxes is one of the main reasons for such uncontrolled price hikes and demanded immediate corrective measures from the government.

The protesters placed three major demands before the government. They urged the Centre to immediately reduce GST and other taxes imposed on commercial gas cylinders, announce subsidies for small traders without delay, and formulate a

clear policy to stabilize gas prices in the long term.

They said they would continue their fight against what they termed as injustice and appealed to the public, traders, and hotel owners to join in large numbers and raise their voice for their rights.

Raising the slogan, "Stop Price Rise – Save People's Lives," the protest was held under the leadership of Youth Congress National Secretary Nagesh Kariyappa.

Krishnaraja Assembly Youth Congress President M.R. Hoysala, City Youth Congress Vice-President Meer Khusru, Rural Vice-President Shashank Gowda, Rohit Singh, Vivek, Karan, Shahrukh, Samarth, and several others participated in the protest.

# State-Level open yogasana competition on May 10

**MYSURU**

Suvarna Belaku Foundation is organizing its first-ever State-Level Open Yogasana Competition on May 10 this year.

K.R. Constituency MLA T.S. Srivatsa will attend the competition program as the chief guest.

In connection with this event, the poster for the Yogasana Competition was released today at the office of K.R. Constituency MLA in Mysuru.

On this occasion, Suvarna Belaku Foundation's Mahesh, yoga teachers Pashupati, Ravi, Manjunath, and others were present.

# Music program for a cause in Mysuru today

**MYSURU**

Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement is organising a signature musical fundraiser event - Swaraanubhuthi, in the aid of Palliative

Care, on May 2 at the convocation Hall of Karnataka State Open University, Mysuru from 5.30 to 8.30 PM featuring singer Vijay Prakash and Anuradha Bhat, a noted Kannada film playback singer. Palliative care is one of SVYM's flagship health care initiatives that started in the year 2009-10. The program has served nearly 12000 persons and their families. Palliative care is a vital service for people living with chronic life-limiting conditions like cancer, HIV aids, stroke, kidney failure, etc. It is not just "end-of-life care". It is a holistic approach that meets the physical, psychological, economic, social and spiritual needs.

The service was started as care for acute relief (pain relief, nursing support) through free home-based care. Later understanding the challenges faced by the individuals and their families we initiated institutional care through SVYM's Palliative Care center located inside PKTB & CD Hospital campus run in collaboration with Mysore Medical College and Research Institute. The program is also extended to Hassan, Bengaluru, Dharwad, Saragur and Madikeri.

CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP

# Kharge's Mixed Signals Deepen K'taka Congress Confusion

**SHYAM SUNDAR VATTAM**
**MYSURU**

The Congress party in Karnataka is once again caught in a familiar storm—one of leadership change, factional calculations, caste equations, and Delhi's strategic silence. Instead of clearing the air, the party high command appears to be sending mixed and confusing signals, leaving both camps—Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar—locked in a silent yet intense battle for the coveted Chief Minister's chair.

As Siddaramaiah's government approaches its third anniversary on May 21, the million-dollar political question remains unanswered: Will Siddaramaiah continue for the remaining two years, or will D.K. Shivakumar finally get his long-awaited turn to occupy the CM gaddi?

Supporters of D.K. Shivakumar are already dreaming of their leader taking the oath of office as Chief Minister. For them, DKS is not merely a claimant but a deserving warrior who stood by the Congress during its darkest days, especially when the party was struggling to survive

defections and internal collapse. They argue that rewarding his loyalty and political management is not just fair—it is politically necessary.

On the other hand, Siddaramaiah's loyalists are sounding alarm bells. They warn the Congress high command that replacing the incumbent Chief Minister could trigger serious political tremors across Karnataka. According to them, Siddaramaiah remains the strongest mass leader of the party, particularly among SCs, STs, Muslims, and backward classes—the crucial social blocs that helped Congress storm back to power in 2023.

Their fear is simple: changing the captain midway could send the wrong message to these communities and destabilize the carefully built social coalition. In Karnataka politics, perception often matters more than arithmetic.

Meanwhile, both camps have turned New Delhi into a political pilgrimage centre. Leaders loyal to Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are making frequent visits to the national capital, carrying their respective agendas, lobbying hard before the Congress high command. Delhi's corridors are witnessing more Karnataka traffic than ever.

The latest round of confusion was triggered by none other than AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge. His statement that Siddaramaiah would continue as Chief Minister was music to the ears of Siddaramaiah supporters. Celebrations quietly followed. However, the DKS camp was left stunned, disappointed, and suspicious. Was this the final word or merely a temporary balancing act?

Adding another twist on Friday, Kharge fired a fresh political salvo by stating that the high command would take a decision "at the right time" after consulting Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. Until then, he instructed leaders to stop public discussions on the issue. In politics, such silence often speaks louder than words.

Yet, another layer complicates the equation—the Vokkaliga factor. If D.K. Shivakumar, the tallest Vokkaliga face in Congress, is denied the top post again, the community may not remain silent. Political messaging to Vokkaliga voters could become crucial ahead of future elections.

The immediate popularity test, however, lies in the bypoll results of Davangere South and Bagalkot Assembly constituencies on May 4. These results could act as a political thermometer for the Siddaramaiah government. If Congress loses both seats to the BJP-JDS combine, the message from the ground will be loud and uncomfortable. It would strengthen the argument for leadership change.

In the end, Karnataka Congress stands at a political crossroads. The high command must choose between continuity and change, stability and ambition, social arithmetic and regional aspirations. Until Delhi decides, Bengaluru will remain restless.

QUICK READ

## KIAL records growth in passenger, cargo operations

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Kempegowda International Airport recorded significant growth in passenger and cargo movement during 2025-26, handling 44.47 million passengers and transporting 5.32 lakh metric tonnes of cargo. International passenger traffic rose by 23.9 per cent to 7.23 million, while domestic traffic increased by 3.3 per cent to 37.24 million passengers. The airport also registered 2,80,800 flight movements during the year, averaging 769 flights daily. The highest single-day traffic touched 837 flights, while 1,39,111 passengers travelled through the airport on the busiest day. KIAL's cargo network currently connects 38 cities through services operated by 15 cargo airlines.

## Machine operator killed in industrial Bommasandra unit

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

A 33-year-old machine operator was crushed to death in an industrial accident at a casting unit in the Bommasandra Industrial Area, police said on Friday. The deceased, identified as Khemlal Newar Pradhan, was working near a die-casting machine at Dimo Castings around 2 pm when the incident occurred. According to a complaint filed by supervisor Mukti Newar, the victim's head was crushed in the machine, causing instant death. The complaint alleged that the company management had failed to provide adequate safety measures and safeguards while operating hazardous machinery. Hebbagodi Police registered a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita relating to causing death by negligence and negligent handling of machinery.

## Silver worth ₹1.2 crore stolen from jewellery shop in Bengaluru

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Thieves allegedly stole silver ornaments worth around ₹1.20 crore after breaking into a jewellery shop by drilling through a wall in north Bengaluru, police said. The burglary took place at MB Jewellers near Havanur close to Dasarahalli's Eighth Mile area. According to police, the accused first entered a room behind the jewellery shop and later broke through the wall to gain access to the store. Around 70 kg of silver items were reportedly stolen in the incident. Bagalgunte Police Station officials visited the spot and launched an investigation. Police are examining CCTV footage and studying the methods used by the burglars. A case has been registered and efforts are underway to trace the accused.

# K'taka considers law for paid menstrual leave, informs HC

Govt tells HC it is examining legislation granting women monthly paid menstrual leave

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has informed the High Court that it is considering enacting a law to provide one day of paid menstrual leave every month to women employees working in companies registered under various labour laws in the state.

The submission was made before a division bench headed by Justice Anant Ramnath Hegde during the hearing of petitions challenging a Labour Department notification issued on November 20, 2025.

The petitions were filed by organisations including the Karnataka Employers Association, Bangalore Hotels Association, Avirata Defense System and Bangalore Employers Association.

Appearing for the state government, Advocate General K Shashikaran Shetty informed the court that the government was examining the issue of introducing a comprehensive law to address menstrual leave with pay and sought postponement of the hearing.

He submitted that the proposed legislation was under active consideration and requested the court to defer further proceedings until the government finalised its position.

The bench observed that it had full confidence in the statement made by the Advocate General and asked whether the government's stand on considering a separate law should be formally recorded in the order. The Advocate General agreed to the suggestion.

Taking note of the submission, the bench stated that since the state government had indicated its intention to frame a law regulating menstrual leave, the matter could be adjourned until after the summer vacation. The court also noted that the hearing had already continued for a considerable period and that further deliberations by the government may help resolve the dispute.

At the same time, the bench clarified that the petitioners would be free to approach the vacation bench if any urgent developments arose during the court recess requiring immediate intervention. The issue of menstrual leave has triggered wider debate among employers, labour groups and women's rights organisations regarding workplace welfare, employee rights and implementation challenges in the private sector.

# Karnataka plans sustainable data parks in B'luru, Mysuru &M'luru

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has decided to establish sustainable data parks in Bengaluru, Mysuru and Mangaluru to support the state's growing industrial and digital infrastructure needs, officials said.

The decision was taken at a ministerial meeting held at Shakti Bhavan, attended by Energy Minister K. J. George, Large and Medium Industries Minister M. B. Patil and IT Minister Priyank Kharge.

Officials said a 500 MW sustainable data centre park will be developed near Hosakote in Bengaluru, with solar power supply routed from Pavagada. The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board has indicated availability of 60 million litres per day (MLD) of treated water, which will undergo additional purification by industries themselves for operational use. The total combined capacity of the three proposed data parks is expected to reach 1,000 MW. The government also confirmed that 350 acres of KIADB land in Baikampady industrial area in Mangaluru is available for development, while suitable land will be identified in Mysuru.

The ministers said investors setting up data centres in these parks will be provided assured electricity and water supply. They directed officials to prepare detailed plans and initiate early investor consultations. A follow-up meeting will be held with participation from Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, who holds the water resources portfolio, along with senior officials to expedite implementation.

Officials said the initiative aims to position Karnataka as a leading destination for green data infrastructure by integrating renewable energy, water reuse systems and industrial-scale digital capacity.

Senior bureaucrats from the Energy, IT, Industries, KIADB and water supply departments attended the meeting, along with representatives from infrastructure agencies.

The government said the projects would be fast-tracked to attract global investors and strengthen Karnataka's role in the emerging data-driven economy.

# Karnataka to convene special Cabinet meeting on State Education Policy report

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The Karnataka Cabinet has decided to convene a special meeting to hold detailed deliberations on the final report submitted by the State Education Policy Commission, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H. K. Patil said on Thursday.

Addressing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Patil said the commission's recommendations required comprehensive discussion due to their long-term implications for the state's education system. He said the special Cabinet meeting would be convened at the earliest.

Apart from education reforms, the Cabinet cleared several major infrastructure, healthcare and welfare proposals.

The government granted administrative approval for the procurement of six MRI machines under the National Free Diagnostic Services Programme at an estimated cost of Rs 81 crore.

The machines will be installed in six district hospitals to strengthen diagnostic facilities.

The Cabinet also approved financial support of Rs 28.47 crore annually as viability gap funding for maintaining flight services on the Bengaluru-Bidar and Bengaluru-Kalaburagi routes. Officials said 80 per cent of the grant would be borne by the Kalyana Karnataka Regional Development Board and the remaining 20 per cent by the Infrastructure and Inland Water Transport Department.

The Cabinet approved distribution of school kits containing books and stationery to registered building and construction workers' children studying in Classes 1 to 12. The scheme will be implemented at an estimated cost of Rs 115.84 crore, with each kit valued at Rs 8,625.

In another major decision, approval was given for preparing a Rs 600 crore action plan for 2026-27 and 2027-28 to develop minority-dominated colonies across Assembly constituencies under the Minority Welfare Department.

The Cabinet further approved multiple infrastructure projects, including road re-asphalting works in Kalaburagi district at a cost of Rs 28.97 crore, additional works for the Deputy Commissioner's office building in Belagavi at Rs 20 crore, and construction of a Government Equipment Warehouse and Training Centre in Jewargi taluk at Rs 73.75 crore.

The decisions reflect the government's continued focus on education reforms, regional connectivity, healthcare expansion and infrastructure development across Karnataka.

## K'taka students post near-perfect results in ICSE, ISC exams

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Students from Karnataka have delivered an exceptional performance in the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations, recording a pass percentage of 99.77 per cent in Class X (ICSE) and 99.96 per cent in Class XII (ISC), according to official data released on Friday.

A total of 31,018 students from 454 schools appeared for the ICSE examination, while 2,673 students from 67 schools took the ISC examination across the state.

The Class XII results showed an improvement compared to last year, while the Class X pass percentage remained steady.

Karnataka students also outperformed the national average, with the ICSE national pass percentage at 99.18 per cent and ISC at 99.13 per cent.

Educators noted that the strong performance comes despite the introduction of more analytical and critical-thinking based questions in this year's examination pattern, reducing reliance on rote learning.

## Cabinet clears ₹600 cr plan for minority colonies devpt

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

The Karnataka Cabinet approved a Rs 600-crore development plan for minority community colonies across the state, covering the financial years 2026–27 and 2027–28. The decision comes amid political debate over the timing of the scheme, with some viewing it as an appeasement measure following recent political developments, including the Davanagere South by-election controversy where a minority candidate was not given a ticket. However, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H. K. Patil rejected such claims, saying the decision had no political motive attached to it. "There is no political connotation. The Minority Welfare Department had prepared an action plan for Rs 600 crore and the Cabinet has cleared it. Nobody was waiting to use it as a political tool," Patil said. He explained that the approval has been extended over two financial years because several infrastructure projects under the scheme may require more time for completion. The extended timeline, he said, was intended to ensure that works are not left unfinished midway.Officials said the programme aims to improve civic infrastructure, housing facilities, roads, drainage systems and basic amenities in minority-dominated localities across Karnataka. In the same Cabinet meeting, the government also approved a major land allotment deal for a leading California-based semiconductor company at the Bengaluru Signature Business Park in Devanahalli.

# Labour Day celebrated at J.P. Bhavan; 25 workers honoured with HDK awards

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

World Labour Day was celebrated with significance at the JDS party office, J.P. Bhavan, where 25 workers from diverse sectors were honoured with the "HD Kumaraswamy Labour Ratna Award" for their dedicated service and contribution to society.

The programme highlighted the role of workers in nation-building and the importance of recognising their efforts across both organised and unorganised sectors.

The event was inaugurated by Greater Bengaluru JDS President H. M. Ramesh Gowda, who said that the sweat of workers forms the foundation of the country's development.

Speaking at the event, Ramesh Gowda described workers as the true builders of the nation. He said that they include construction labourers working under the sun, sanitation workers cleaning streets in all weather conditions, auto and taxi drivers working long hours, and women employed in garment factories. He stressed that these workers are the real contributors to the country's growth.

He further said that the contribution of labourers is more valuable than gold, as every sector of the economy depends on their hard work.

However, he expressed concern that many workers continue to face financial and social hardships despite their essential role. He urged the government to ensure better welfare measures, social security, and timely benefits for labourers.

As part of the programme, 25 workers from sectors including construction, garments, transport, civic services, domestic work, security services, and loading-unloading activities were felicitated.

Senior leaders including MLC T. N. Javaraya Gowda, former minister Leeladevi R. Prasad, and former MLA K. A. Tippe Swamy were present. Party leaders also emphasised the need to strengthen labour rights and improve working conditions across sectors.

The event concluded with a call for greater respect and dignity for workers in all walks of life.

**Parking Facility Inaugurated**

Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan, along with Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, inaugurated the new parking system at KR Market. MLA Shivanna, Council Member Sudam Das, KMDC President Altaf Khan, leaders Sampath Raj, DC Ramesh, and Govindaraju were present. ➤ CH PHOTO

TRANSPORT SHORTAGE ISSUE

# *Inter-state bus shortage concerns commuters on Karnataka–Andhra routes*

**CH NEWS,** BENGALURU

Commuters travelling between Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have urged the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) to increase its bus fleet on key inter-state routes, citing severe shortage of services and frequent overcrowding, particularly during weekends and festival seasons.

Passengers said they are increasingly dependent on private operators due to limited state-run buses on routes such as Kadapa, Madanapalle, Tirupati and Srikalahasti via Chintamani–Madanapalle, and Bengaluru–Ramasamudram via Punganur.

- Current buses to Andhra Pradesh: **279**
- Planned under new agreement: **420 new + 92 additional**
- Daily KSRTC passengers: **34.8 lakh**
- Fleet overaged: **40%**
- Villages covered in Andhra: **20,090 of 21,748 (92.4%)**

The All-Karnataka State Road Transport Employees' Federation said the overcrowding has worsened after the implementation of the state's free bus travel scheme for women. Drivers and conductors said they are under pressure managing excessive passenger loads, leading to delays and operational stress.

Federation secretary general B. Jayadevaraje Urs said nearly 40 per cent of KSRTC's fleet is overaged and still in operation due to delayed replacement and financial constraints. He said passenger demand has surged significantly, with occupancy rising from about 60 per cent earlier to nearly 90–95 per cent after the Shakti scheme.

He added that long waiting times, breakdown risks and safety concerns have increased due to the shortage of buses. The federation has demanded replacement of old vehicles and induction of new buses on priority.

According to the 2025–26 economic survey, KSRTC's daily ridership has increased to 34.8 lakh from 29.7 lakh before the scheme was introduced. KSRTC officials said the corporation currently operates 279 buses on routes to Andhra Pradesh under the existing inter-state transport agreement. They added that under a revised agreement, 420 buses are planned for new routes and 92 additional services for existing routes, pending final notification from Andhra Pradesh.

The government has also announced plans to induct 1,500 new buses in the 2026–27 financial year to strengthen the fleet.

QUICK READ

### Mother dies saving children from drowning

**CHIKKABALLAPURA**

Tragedy struck at Murugamalla Dargah Lake in Chintamani taluk where a young mother lost her life while trying to save her drowning children. The deceased, Tabusum Khan, 24, from Banashankari in Bengaluru, had visited the dargah with family. While she went to fetch clothes, the children entered the lake and began to drown. She quickly jumped in to rescue them but could not swim and drowned. Family members and the father managed to pull the children to safety. The husband broke down in tears, saying he could save the children but not his wife. Incident deeply shocked the local community.

### Wildlife team monitors elephant conflict situation closely

**HASSAN**

The wild elephants Bhima and Captain have been seen again in Kogodu village of Belur taluk in Hassan district. Seven months after their fierce fight, the two once again came close and looked ready to clash. However they moved away safely when villagers arrived at the spot. The incident has worried local people and labourers in the area. Forest team ETF is tracking both elephants closely. Earlier in November 2025, Bhima broke one tusk during a violent fight with Captain near Jagaboranahalli village. That fight happened when Bhima hit a tree in anger and injured himself badly said forest officials

### Buddha teachings guide civilization says DC

**YADGIR**

District Collector Harshal Bhoyar said that the principles of Lord Buddha have guided world civilization and brought major social change. He spoke at the Buddha Jayanti programme held at Lumbini Park in Yadgir, organized by the district administration and other departments. He said Buddha's teachings continue to inspire peace, equality, and non-violence in modern society. The Collector said Buddha was the first to strongly oppose the caste system and promote human equality. He added that during Emperor Ashoka's time, Buddha's message spread widely across Asia through local languages. He also said that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar helped revive Buddhism in modern India, especially in Karnataka and Maharashtra. Speakers at the event said that Buddha's Eightfold Path and Panchsheel principles guide people toward a better life.

# Chitradurga achieves big jump in exam results

Officials said district used targeted strategy, identifying weak institutions and fixing academic gaps instead of uniform interventions

**CH NEWS,CHITRADURGA**

Chitradurga district has emerged as one of the best-performing regions in Karnataka's 2025–26 SSLC and PUC examinations, recording a sharp rise in pass percentages and securing the 3rd rank in SSLC improvement and 5th in PUC improvement statewide.

The results were achieved through data-driven interventions led by Ed Lab Chitradurga, a district-level education evidence lab focused on systemic academic improvement using analytical tools and targeted monitoring.

Officials said the district adopted a focused strategy based on identifying underperforming institutions and addressing specific academic gaps rather than applying uniform interventions across all schools and colleges.

In SSLC results, Chitradurga improved its overall pass percentage from 70.45 per cent to 92.25 per cent. In PUC, the district improved from 59.87 per cent to 79.12 per cent, marking a significant jump in student performance.

According to officials, a

large share of failures in previous years was concentrated in a small group of government and aided institutions, which were identified for intensive monitoring and academic support. Targeted corrective measures included continuous review mechanisms, structured academic tracking and performance-based interventions.

The district administration also implemented large-scale exam simulation exercises to familiarise students with real examination conditions. These included mock exams conducted under strict protocols resembling final board examinations, helping reduce stress and improve preparedness.

**Chitradurga academic performance snapshot**

**CH NEWS**

- SSLC pass rate: 92.25% (up from 70.45%)
- PUC pass rate: 79.12% (up from 59.87%)
- SSLC rank: 3rd most improved district in Karnataka
- PUC rank: 5th most improved district in Karnataka
- Key intervention: Data-driven school-level monitoring
- Key tool: Exam simulation and performance tracking

Officials said the "Chitradurga Model" is now being considered as a scalable framework for broader educational reforms across the state.

# Buddha's eternal teachings guide humanity: Parameshwar

**TUMAKURU**

**Dr. Parameshwar said global stress needs Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path; he emphasized equality and Buddha's philosophy transcending all social distinctions**

Buddha's teachings, which clearly explain the truth of life in a simple and meaningful way, will remain relevant as long as the sun and moon exist, said Home Minister and Secretary of Sri Siddhartha Educational Institution Dr. G. Parameshwar.

He was speaking at the Buddha Purnima celebrations held at Sri Siddhartha Nagar on the outskirts of Tumakuru. The program marked the birth, enlightenment, and Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha, which are all observed on the same day.

Dr. Parameshwar said the world today is going through suffering and mental stress, and the only way to overcome it is by following the Noble Eightfold Path taught by Buddha. He stressed that Buddha's philosophy does not differentiate between people and teaches equality for all.

He urged everyone to spread Buddha's teachings widely so that they reach every section of society. He also said that the name of Siddhartha will continue to be respected in the world for generations if these values are followed sincerely.

Sri Siddhartha Educational Institution administrator Nanjudappa said Buddha is truly the light of the world. He noted that the great saint promoted peace and helped inspire many social reformers to fight caste discrimination. He added that Buddha's message of equality remains important even today and should be practiced in daily life.

Institute guide Narasingappa spoke about the importance of true education. He said modern education often focuses only on jobs, while real education should help remove mental stress and inner problems. He explained that excessive desires and attachment lead to unhappiness, and Buddha's teachings guide people toward a balanced and peaceful life.Several dignitaries attended the program, including Dr. S. Anand, Dr. Ashok Mehta, Tumakuru Deputy Commissioner Shubha Kalyan, Superintendent of Police Ashok, Dr. Venkatesh, Dr. Mahantesh M. Nadakatti, along with principals, teachers, and staff members of various institutions.The event concluded with a call to follow Buddha's path of peace, equality, and self-discipline for building a better and more balanced society.

*Complaint to Lokayukta alleged financial irregularities in Komul Milk Union; Nanjegowda denied charges, calling them misleading*

# Nanjegowda challenges rival over Komul allegations

**KOLAR**

Malur MLA and Komul Milk Union President K.Y. Nanjegowda has strongly responded to corruption allegations, challenging former MLA K.S. Manjunatha Gowda to step away from politics if charges of irregularities worth ₹300 crore in Komul are not proven.

Speaking at a press conference held at the Komul Milk Union office in Belaganahalli village along National Highway 75, Nanjegowda said he is ready to accept political retirement if the Lokayukta proves any wrongdoing in the cooperative body.

He further challenged Manjunatha Gowda, saying that if the allegations against him are proved false, the former MLA should publicly declare support for him and become his follower. He also added that if elected again, he would support Manjunatha Gowda's return as MLA in the 2028 elections.

The controversy began after a complaint was filed with the Lokayukta by Nagaraj of Gooliganahalli, alleging large-scale financial irregularities in the Komul Milk Union. Nanjegowda, however, rejected all charges and said the claims are being used to mislead people in Malur.

He clarified that Komul is a cooperative institution where all financial transactions are regularly audited by internal auditors every month. He said there is no scope for large cash withdrawals as being claimed and insisted that all records can be submitted to the Lokayukta for verification.

# Chitradurga rural roads get new development push

**CHITRADURGA**

People in rural Chitradurga will benefit from new road works after MLA K.C. Veerendra Pappi launched development activity in Pandarahalli village. On Friday, he performed Bhoomi Puja for a CC road project worth Rs. 50 lakh at Yare Oni. He said the government works aim to improve farmer life and strengthen village connectivity.

MLA K.C. Veerendra Pappi said farmers are the backbone of the economy and deserve better roads for transport of crops. He said cart roads in villages are often damaged and cause problems during rain. Farmers face losses when produce falls from tractors and bullock carts due to poor road conditions. He added that the government has sanctioned special grants under KRIDL for improving cart roads. The MLA also said that future works like check dams and embankments will support farmers with better water supply. Farmers in Chitradurga depend heavily on areca nut cultivation and need groundwater improvement. Villagers and engineers were present during the Bhoomi Puja ceremony and welcomed the development work. Locals said the new CC road will help smooth transport of agricultural goods and reduce damage during monsoon season.

They appreciated the MLA for focusing on rural infrastructure development in the constituency.

Officials from KRIDL and villagers including Sarath and others attended the programme. Leaders said the project reflects commitment to rural growth and farmer welfare in Chitradurga region. It will also improve daily travel for villagers and support better market access for crops. Residents expressed hope that continued government attention will solve long pending road issues and boost rural economy through better connectivity and safety measures in coming years across the district soon region.

# Kolar Children's Mela ends with cultural celebration

**KOLAR**

The concluding ceremony of the Adima Cultural Center Children's Mela 2026 was held at Shivagange Adimah Cultural Center in Devalli Betta, Kolar. The 20-day camp brought together 180 children, most of them under the age of 15, to learn art, culture, and life skills. Camp director Dear Rajappa said the programme aimed to build compassion, humanity, and creativity among children. He said the camp has been conducted for 20 years from Ambedkar Jayanti to Buddha Purnima every year. This year it included training in theatre, dance, music, and traditional folk arts. President N. Muniswamy said society is facing environmental and moral challenges and cultural education is needed to restore values. He added that air, water, and soil pollution are growing concerns and children must be guided towards awareness. District Collector M. R. Ravi said such camps help build discipline, teamwork, and social responsibility among young minds. The closing ceremony featured folk performances including Keelu Kudre, Dollu Kunita, Kolata, Veeragase, and other traditional dances. Children also staged two plays showcasing social messages and creativity. An award was presented to Pinjar Abdul Saab for his contribution to theatre arts. Officials, artists, and villagers attended the event in large numbers. Speakers said the camp helps children learn through play and develop scientific thinking and cultural understanding. The programme concluded with a mass meal and cultural singing sessions by participants. Organisers said the initiative will continue to promote unity peace and human values among future generations in Kolar district. They thanked trainers volunteers and parents for supporting the 20-day programme that focused on holistic child development and cultural learning.

# H5N1 outbreak confirmed in Tumakuru peacocks

**TUMAKURU**

Panic briefly spread among residents after officials confirmed that the H5N1 avian influenza virus caused the death of peacocks in the Urdigere hobli forest area. However, authorities have assured that there is no reason for public fear and that strict control measures are in place.Deputy Commissioner Shubha Kalyan said the confirmation came after laboratory testing of samples from peacocks that died on April 16 in the Kolihalli forest region. He addressed reporters after holding an emergency meeting with the State Communicable Disease Awareness Committee and district officials at the Deputy Commissioner's office.Following the incident, the district administration immediately formed a Rapid Response Team (RRT) to prevent any possible spread of the virus. Surveillance has been intensified in five nearby villages—Kolihalli, Ullenahalli, Bommanahalli, Bhairasandra, and Kallalli—and within a 10 km radius of the affected area. Officials from the Forest Department, Animal Husbandry, Health Department, Revenue Department, and local gram panchayats have been deployed to monitor the situation and spread awareness among the public. Poultry farmers in the region have been advised to take extra precautions.As a safety measure, poultry and meat shops in the affected zone have been temporarily closed. Authorities have also urged people to report any unusual bird deaths immediately to the Smart City Control Room.The Deputy Commissioner said that while H5N1 is a serious infection, there is currently no evidence of spread to domestic animals or other wildlife beyond the confirmed cases. However, 15 chicken deaths reported at a Bommanahalli poultry farm are under investigation,

and samples have been sent for testing.

## Chitradurga All India Radio to mark 35th anniversary

**CHITRADURGA**

Chitradurga All India Radio will celebrate its 35th anniversary on Sunday, May 3, with special programs for listeners. At 8:30 am Kavyadhare poetry by district women poets will be broadcast. At 9:05 am discussion with writer Deepika Maraghatta will air. At 10 am a variety show will feature young talents from Davangere music scene Haseena Begum and Sangeetha S. Programs are compiled by Niranjan Murthy R Pandarahalli.

# Villagers confront MLA over long pending problems

**KUDLIGI**

Residents of Sunkadakallu village on the border of Kudligi and Hagaribommanahalli taluks in Vijayanagar district have expressed strong anger over lack of basic development for more than 20 years. During a visit by MLA N T Srinivas villagers raised issues including delay in issuing title deeds and poor basic facilities in the village. The villagers said repeated complaints to officials over the years had not brought any improvement in their living conditions.

Responding to their concerns the MLA immediately contacted concerned department officials on the spot and directed them to speed up distribution of title deeds and development works. However tension rose when villagers alleged negligence by the Panchayat Development Officer saying that even basic requests were ignored despite repeated appeals. Angry residents demanded action against the PDO claiming that administrative inaction had kept the village backward for decades.

Following the complaints MLA Srinivas escalated the matter by calling senior officials including the Chief Executive Officer and demanded immediate action against the responsible officer. Officials reviewed the allegations and decided to suspend the PDO with immediate effect pending further inquiry into the charges.

GLOBAL MEET ALUMNI

# *India's unique finance system highlighted at Global Meet*

**TUMAKURU**

India's financial and business system stands apart from those of other countries, just as the nation is unique in its spiritual and secular unity, said Rotary IT Director Raghu Bannur. He was speaking as the chief guest at the Global Meet 2026 Alumni Remembrance Program held at Sri Siddhartha Institute of Business Studies (SSIS).

Bannur noted that India follows its own economic path, shaped by its values and independent approach. He highlighted that many students from small institutions in India have gone on to build successful businesses and hold key roles in top companies both in India and abroad.He also pointed out that several alumni of the Siddhartha Institute have achieved remarkable success in the business world. He urged former students to give back to their institution and contribute meaningfully to its growth.Entrepreneur Siddharaju, a sales head based in Uganda, shared his experiences of working in international markets. He said that working in marketing across countries helps one understand different business systems and practices. He added that India offers vast opportunities in business education, and many entrepreneurs trained in India are now investing back in the country.

Siddharaju also revealed that he has built a business worth 15 million dollars in Uganda. However, he warned that global conflicts may lead to challenges such as shortages of petroleum products in the future, urging students to prepare for such situations.

Inchara, Vice President at the National Bank of Australia, said the Siddhartha institution has grown steadily and continues to follow strong guiding principles. She noted that on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, alumni from across the world had gathered, reflecting the institution's global reach.

QUICK READ

## Haveri student tops MSc physics exams

**HAVERI**

Sneha S. Hiremath from Haveri city has achieved first rank in M.Sc. Physics and brought pride to her family and district. She was honoured with five gold medals by Governor of Karnataka Thawar Chand Gehlot for her outstanding academic performance. Sneha is the daughter of retired lecturer S.C. Hiremath and teacher Halamma S. Hiremath. Her success has been praised by her professors, parents, and well-wishers who expressed happiness over her achievement. Many in the community have appreciated her hard work and dedication, calling her an inspiration for other students aiming for higher education success today.

## Tragic elderly man dies after bike crash

**KANAKAGIRI**

An elderly man Jakkappa Dayapulle 75 died in a bike accident near MRPL petrol bunk on Kanakagiri Tavaragera road on Thursday morning. He was riding his son's two-wheeler from Virupapura village to Kanakagiri when another bike hit him from behind. He suffered serious injuries and was taken to Kanakagiri Government Hospital where he died despite treatment. Police said the victim's son Ambanna filed a complaint against the bike rider Hanumantha Muradi of Kanakapura village. A case has been registered and investigation is ongoing. Police are continuing the investigation to find the exact cause of the accident.

## New Education Officer warmly welcomed in Hunsur

**HUNSUR**

H. Kalanayaka has taken charge as the Field Education Officer of Hunsur Taluk and was warmly welcomed by local education staff. Cluster Resource Persons S. Vasanth Kumar of Mullur and Halegowda of Karnakuppe, along with Head Teacher Suresh and High School Teacher Kalkunike Mahadeva, attended the welcome. Assistant teachers Kalkunike Paramesh, Moduru Chandregowda, Moduru Devaraju, Madhuvanahalli Nagaraju, and Doddakoppalu Manjunath also participated in the reception ceremony. Officials said the welcome reflects cooperation among school staff and hopes for improved education quality in Hunsur Taluk under the new officer's guidance and leadership and better learning outcomes for students ahead in schools

# UT Khader urges language labs in institutions

### Khader said industries drive development and jobs, urging collaboration with educational institutions to provide practical skill training

**MANGALURU**

Speaker U.T. Khader said that language laboratories should be set up in educational institutions to improve language learning among students and strengthen communication skills.

He was speaking after inaugurating the three-day Canara Engineering, Industrial and Technology Exhibition organised by the Canara Industries Association at Karavali Utsav Ground near Lalbagh in Mangaluru.

Khader said industries play a major role in boosting development and creating employment opportunities in the region. He stressed that industrial units and educational institutions must work together to train students with practical skills that match industry needs.

He also said that large industries should support and encourage small startups to help them grow and contribute to the economy. According to him, such cooperation will strengthen the overall industrial ecosystem.

Referring to government initiatives, Khader said a skill training centre worth ₹60 crore has been announced in this year's budget for the district. He expressed confidence that India will emerge as a major global supplier of skilled human resources in the next 15 to 20 years.

MP Brijesh Chowta, who was the chief guest, said industries should expand beyond traditional sectors and also contribute to defence manufacturing. He noted that the MSME sector is currently providing employment to nearly 32 crore people in the country, making it second only to agriculture in job creation.

MLA Vedavyas Kamath said industrial growth is currently facing several challenges and stressed that cooperation between the government and banking sector is essential for progress.MLA Dr. Bharat Shetty said the Baikampady industrial area has been declared a special investment zone and will now come under KIADB for administration and tax collection. He suggested that industry representatives should regularly engage with KIADB to ensure transparency in fund usage.

The exhibition features over 120 industries showcasing technological innovations. Around 90 percent of participating units are from coastal and western states including Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. The event also includes food stalls and government support counters aimed at promoting welfare schemes for entrepreneurs and industries.

Industrial leaders, bankers, and officials attended the event, which highlighted the importance of skill development, innovation, and collaboration between education and industry for future growth.

## Workers honoured on Labour Day in Vijayapura

**VIJAYAPURA**

On International Workers' Day, Ravi Industries owner Sidram Kase said that workers are the true strength of society and no world can exist without them. He spoke at a Labour Day programme held at the Mulwad Industrial Area where workers were honoured with shawls and sweets. Kase said May 1 is dedicated to the working class and their efforts build the nation and the state. He added that every field depends on the hard work of workers and their service must be respected and appreciated. Workers Neta, Badakana, Bulai, Gopal and others were felicitated during the event. He expressed gratitude to them for their contribution to industrial growth.

# Buddha's peace mantra essential for today: H.K. Patil

**GADAG**

Law, Justice, Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism Minister H.K. Patil said that Lord Buddha's message of peace and coexistence has become more important than ever in today's world, which is facing rising global conflicts.He was speaking after inaugurating the Buddha Jayanti celebrations held at the District Administration Bhavan auditorium in Gadag on Friday, jointly organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat and Kannada and Culture Department.Patil said that Buddha's teachings are not limited to any religion or region but belong to the entire world. He warned that ongoing global conflicts, including wars between major nations, are causing huge economic and human losses. He said even powerful countries are suffering massive financial damage due to war, while destruction caused by modern warfare continues to rise.The minister said Buddha is not just a symbol of meditation but a great teacher of equality, discipline and peace. He added that Buddha envisioned a society without discrimination between rich and poor, men and women, and one based on harmony and understanding.He stressed that India continues to move forward with unity despite diversity, largely guided by the principles of Buddha, Basavanna and Mahatma Gandhi. He also said that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was deeply inspired by Buddha's teachings while framing the Indian Constitution.Announcing a major development, Patil said a grand Buddha Vihara will be constructed in Gadag at a cost of ₹10 crore to promote Buddhist culture and philosophy. He said ₹3 crore has already been released and the project will begin soon near the city's medical college hill area.

**Patil said Buddha's teachings are universal; he warned global wars cause economic and human losses, increasing destruction even for powerful nations**

*Manegar said youth are national assets needing support and assured full cooperation for their social initiatives in Gurmitkal constituency*

# Youth power key to nation's progress: Manegar

**YADGIR**

Former Backward Classes Commission member and Congress leader Sharanappa Manegar said that the active contribution of youth is essential for the progress of both the state and the nation.

He was speaking after inaugurating the Killanakera Premier League (KPL) Season-4 cricket tournament held in Killanakera village of Yadgir taluk.

Manegar said that young people are the most valuable asset of the country and deserve continuous encouragement and support. He assured that all social initiatives taken up by the youth of the Gurmitkal constituency would receive full cooperation and backing.

He noted that the youth of Killanakera village have shown great enthusiasm and strong interest in sports, which is a positive sign for community development.

Highlighting the importance of Workers' Day, he said that workers play a major role in building the state, the country, and the world. He also pointed out that it was special that Buddha Purnima also coincided with the same day, making the occasion more meaningful.

Manegar said he felt happy to inaugurate the KPL tournament on such an important and auspicious day.

He added that sports are highly beneficial for both physical and mental health. According to him, participation in games helps build friendship, trust, discipline, and unity among youth.

He advised players to focus on sportsmanship, follow rules, and avoid unnecessary disputes during competitions.

The KPL Season-4 tournament saw participation from several local leaders, community representatives, and youth groups. The event was marked by enthusiasm from players and villagers alike, turning it into a major sporting occasion in the region.

Organizers said the tournament aims to encourage rural sports talent and provide a platform for young players to showcase their skills.

Several political leaders, social workers, and local organizers attended the event and extended their support to the initiative, highlighting the importance of sports in youth development and community harmony in rural Karnataka.

# Speeding KSRTC bus flips, dozens injured

**CHAMARAJANAGAR**

A KSRTC bus overturned on the Male Mahadeshwar Betta road at Talubetta turn in Hanur taluk, leaving more than 30 passengers injured. The bus, carrying around 50 people and going from Male Mahadeshwar Betta to Kollegal, lost control near a barrier and turned over. Several passengers were seriously hurt, including conductor Padmavati with a head injury and others from Mysuru and nearby villages. All injured people were taken to hospitals in Kaudalli, Hanur and Kollegal for treatment. Police said heavy traffic and a full moon crowd caused a jam, and officers worked to clear the road. Witnesses blamed speeding and careless driving, saying the driver jumped out and ran away after the crash. Many injured people are angry and are still receiving treatment in nearby hospitals. Officials also noted a recent bus accident in Udupi where three people died in a separate crash.

# SUB-REGISTRATION OFFICE SHIFTS TO PAPERLESS OPERATIONS

**CHAMARAJANAGAR**

For the first time in Karnataka, paperless registration has started at the Chamarajanagar Sub-Registration Office under the Cauvery 2.0 portal.The launch was done by Inspector General of Stamps and Commissioner of Stamps M. P. Mullai Mugilan by pressing a computer button at the office in the taluk premises. He said the new system is a major step towards citizen-friendly, transparent and fast registration services.It replaces the old paper-based method with a fully digital process that reduces errors and improves reliability in property transactions. Officials said documents are now secured with digital signature, encryption, audit trail and hash verification to prevent fraud and tampering.The system also uses Aadhaar-based identification and allows citizens to complete registration directly, making the process faster and simpler. The government plans to roll out this paperless registration system across all districts in the next two to three months in a phased manner.It aims to improve transparency, speed and convenience in public services and reduce dependency on manual paperwork. During the event, a petition was also submitted by the District Letter Writers' Association regarding their demands.Several officials including Deputy Inspector General of Registration H. N. Prabhakaran, District Registrar Kiran and others were present. The programme marked a significant step towards digital governance and was welcomed as a major reform in the registration department.Officials said the initiative will reduce delays, improve accuracy, and help farmers and citizens complete property related work with ease while ensuring transparency and trust in government services across the state system is expected to be expanded soon to all districts across the state soon also.

# Cylinder price hike sparks political row in Belagavi

**BELAGAVI**

Women and Child Development Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar has strongly criticised the central government over the sharp increase in commercial LPG cylinder prices. The price has reportedly risen from Rs 2,162 to Rs 3,153, marking an increase of Rs 991, which she called an anti-people decision. Speaking in Belagavi, the minister said such a steep hike has never been seen before and accused the Centre of ignoring public welfare. She alleged that the decision was taken soon after elections in some states and reflects a disregard for promises made to citizens.Hebbalkar said the price increase will directly affect the hotel and hospitality sector, putting additional pressure on traders who are already struggling with rising costs. She warned that this would eventually lead to higher food prices, making daily life more expensive for common people.

WORKERS UNITY PARADE

# *Vijayapura May Day procession held across city*

**VIJAYAPURA**

As part of May Day celebrations, a large procession was held in Vijayapura city from Korichawk to major landmarks including Sri Siddheshwar Temple, Gandhi Circle, Basaveshwara Circle, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Circle. The event was jointly organised by the Lorry Porters Association, Akshara Dasoha Employees Association, and Construction Workers Association.

The rally witnessed participation from workers, union leaders, and activists who highlighted issues affecting labourers locally and globally.



Labour leader Iranna Bellundagi said workers around the world are preparing to observe May Day at a time when international tensions and economic pressures are rising. He alleged that global conflicts and political decisions by powerful nations are worsening instability across countries.

CITU Convener Lakshman Handral said the current global situation reflects a deep crisis in capitalism, with powerful nations attempting to regain economic and political dominance. He said such actions are linked to control over energy resources, global markets, and currency influence.

CITU Co-Convener Somappa Aiyatti said ongoing international conflicts have had serious economic impacts, especially on developing countries. He noted that disruptions in fuel and gas supply chains have increased prices and affected industries and households worldwide.

Suresh Jeebi highlighted the impact of rising fuel prices on common people. He said increased costs of cooking gas, oil, and fertilizers are severely affecting poor families, workers, and small businesses. He pointed out that many migrant workers are facing hardship, with some returning to their native places due to job losses and rising living costs.'

## Villagers accuse ration rice fraud complaint lodged

**VIJAYANAGAR**

People in Haravadi village of Kudligi taluk in Vijayanagar district have complained that ration rice has not been distributed properly for the last three months. Leader Girish of the All India Kisan Sabha has filed a complaint to the Deputy Commissioner Kavitha Mannikeri seeking action against fair price shop owners. He alleged that more than 200 ration card holders have not received rice for three months and even when given, 2 kg is deducted per card. There are also allegations that ration rice is being sold in the black market instead of reaching beneficiaries. This issue is reported not only in Haravadi but also in Jarmali, Dibbadahalli and Gaddalagatte villages where distribution has stopped for months. Villagers say repeated complaints to officials have not brought any action and inspections are only formal without results. They also said ration irregularities have been going on for nearly a year affecting poor families badly.

## QUICK READ

### Two Jailed For Hoisting Khalistani Flag on Punjab Govt Building

**Mohali**

A special NIA court in Mohali has convicted and sentenced two men to five years and six months in prison for hoisting a Khalistani flag atop a government building in Punjab's Moga in 2020, the National Investigation Agency said on Friday. The convicts, Inderjeet Singh and Jaspal Singh, were also fined ₹16,000 each. According to the NIA, the duo carried out the act at the deputy commissioner's office on August 14, 2020, allegedly at the instigation of designated terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. Investigators said the accused insulted the national flag before hoisting the Khalistani banner. The NIA further alleged that Pannun's associate Rana Singh alias Harpreet Singh had paid the accused to execute the act.

### Rajasthan police freeze drug trafficker's assets

**Jaipur**

In a major crackdown under 'Operation Trinetra', Rajasthan's Pratapgarh Police have initiated proceedings to freeze assets worth around Rs 2.5 crore belonging to alleged drug trafficker Jamshed Khan alias 'Seth Lala'. Acting under the NDPS Act, police secured approval from the competent authority in New Delhi to freeze the property. Officials said Khan amassed wealth through narcotics trafficking and invested it in a lavish house in Devaldi village. He was arrested in connection with a March 2026 synthetic drug raid in Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh. Eight criminal cases are registered against him across Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

# India Launches First Barrier-Free Tolling System on National Highway

Union Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday announced the launch of India's first Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) barrier-less tolling system at the Choryasi toll plaza on the Surat–Bharuch stretch of National Highway-48 in Gujarat

**SURAT**

The initiative marks a major step toward fully automated toll collection and aims to transform highway travel across the country.

The newly introduced MLFF system eliminates the need for vehicles to stop at toll plazas, allowing seamless movement even on high-traffic routes. Developed as a pilot project, the Choryasi toll plaza lies on the busy Mumbai–Delhi corridor and is expected to serve as a model for nationwide implementation.

According to Gadkari, the system integrates Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology with FASTag infrastructure to enable automated toll deductions. Vehicles passing through the toll point are identified using high-resolution cameras and RFID sensors mounted on overhead gantries. The toll charges are then directly deducted from the user's linked account without any manual intervention.

This advanced system ensures that vehicles can maintain normal highway speeds while passing through the toll plaza, significantly reducing congestion and eliminating long queues that are typically seen at busy toll points. Officials noted that the system is also capable of detecting vehicles without valid FASTags using number plate recognition, after which notices for

toll payment are issued.

The introduction of MLFF tolling is part of the government's broader push to digitise and modernise India's road infrastructure. Gadkari emphasised that the initiative aligns with global standards and represents a major leap in improving efficiency within the country's transport network.

He further highlighted that the system is expected to bring multiple benefits, including reduced travel time, improved fuel efficiency, and lower vehicular emissions. By eliminating the need for vehicles to idle at toll booths, the system also contributes to environmental sustainability.

The government has indicated that the Surat-based installation will act as a testing ground for wider adoption. Plans are already in place to expand MLFF technology to more than 1,000 toll plazas across India in the coming years, signaling a nationwide transition toward barrier-less tolling and smarter highway infrastructure.

# AP Spends ₹33,000 Cr Annually on Social Pensions, Says Chandrababu Naidu

**AMARAVATI**

He emphasised that the programme reflects the government's commitment to supporting vulnerable sections of society. Addressing a public gathering in Krishna district after distributing pensions under the NTR Bharosa scheme, Naidu highlighted that around 62.47 lakh beneficiaries receive pensions every month. Over the past 22 months, the government has reportedly spent more than Rs 63,000 crore on the initiative, underlining the scale of welfare expenditure.

The Chief Minister said that the government ensures the availability of approximately Rs 2,700 crore every month to sustain the programme. He clarified that such spending is not viewed as a financial burden but rather as a responsibility aimed at providing relief and stability to economically weaker sections. According to him, the scheme plays a crucial role in improving the quality of life for millions of citizens.

Naidu participated in the 'Pedala Sevalo' programme in Pamidimukkala village of Pamarru constituency, where he directly interacted with beneficiaries. During the event, he reiterated the government's commitment to inclusive development and welfare-driven governance.

The Chief Minister also referred to the broader vision of rebuilding Andhra Pradesh in coordination with Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He stated that the coalition government, led by the Telugu Desam Party, has been working continuously for the past 22 months to restore administrative efficiency and revive development across sectors.

In addition to welfare measures, Naidu reaffirmed his government's promise to reduce electricity tariffs, stating that there would be no increase in power rates. He criticised previous administrations for imposing multiple electricity tariff hikes, claiming that such measures had placed an unnecessary burden on the public. The Chief Minister concluded by asserting that his government remains focused on balancing welfare initiatives with long-term development goals, ensuring both economic stability and social support for the people of Andhra Pradesh.

# BJP Confident of Assam Victory: Jayanta Malla Baruah

**GUWAHATI**

Assam Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah on Friday expressed strong confidence in the Bharatiya Janata Party's prospects in the upcoming Assembly elections, predicting a decisive mandate for the ruling alliance and victory across key constituencies, including all three seats in Nalbari district.

Speaking to reporters, Baruah asserted that the BJP-led alliance is heading toward a sweeping victory in the state. He claimed that the electorate has already made up its mind in favour of the ruling party, adding that opposition parties, particularly those led by the Congress, would lose political relevance once the results are declared.

Baruah took a direct swipe at opposition leaders, stating that discussions around Congress and its allies would fade after May 4, when the election results are expected. He emphasised that the BJP's extensive grassroots campaigning and outreach efforts have generated strong public support across regions.

Focusing on Nalbari district, the minister said the party is confident of winning all three Assembly constituencies, highlighting it as a key battleground in Lower Assam. He further projected a significant overall victory for the BJP, estimating that the party would secure no fewer than 90 seats in the 126-member Assam Assembly.

According to Baruah, even crossing the 100-seat mark would not be surprising, given what he described as overwhelming support for the party. He pointed out that the BJP's position in Lower Assam has strengthened considerably over the past five years, compared to previous elections.

In the last Assembly elections, we won 20 out of 51 seats in Lower Assam. This time, we are confident of winning at least 35 seats in the region, he said, underlining improved organisational strength and voter outreach.

The minister also expressed optimism about the party's chances in Tamulpur, predicting a comfortable victory for BJP candidate Biswajit Daimary. He suggested that strong performances in constituencies like Nalbari and Tamulpur would play a decisive role in shaping the final election outcome.

With Lower Assam emerging as a crucial electoral zone, the BJP's performance in the region is expected to be a key determinant of its overall success.

### Punjab Cong Demands Alcohol, Dope Tests of All Assembly Members

**CHANDIGARH**

Seeking breath analyser and dope tests of all members, including Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, pandemonium prevailed in the Assembly at its special one-day session on Friday to mark International Labour Day, with the main Opposition Congress MLAs staging a walkout after heated exchanges over conduct inside the House with treasury benches. Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa demanded a closed-door alcohol test on all MLAs in the Vidhan Sabha after allegations of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann appearing drunk inside the House. The Congress alleged that questions had been raised about the conduct and physical condition of members during proceedings and insisted that medical verification was necessary to maintain transparency and accountability in the House.

### MoS, AU Commission Finalise Preparations for India-Africa Forum Summit

**NEW DELHI**

Minister of State for External Affairs, Kirti Vardhan Singh held a meeting with an African Union (AU) Commission delegation led by Willy Nyamitwe, Chairperson of AU Permanent Representative Committee and Ambassador of Burundi in New Delhi on Friday. The discussions, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), focused on strengthening multifaceted ties and making preparations for the upcoming fourth India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-IV).

Pleased to meet the delegation from the African Union Commission, led by H.E. Mr. Willy Nyamitwe, Chairperson of AU Permanent Representative Committee and Ambassador of Burundi. Held productive discussions on our multifaceted ties and preparations for the upcoming IAFS-IV. The India-Africa partnership is a vital pillar of South-South Cooperation, the minister wrote on X.

# BJP Targets Mamata Banerjee Over EVM Concerns, Predicts Political Shift in Bengal

**KOLKATA**

Bhattacharya claimed that the ruling Trinamool Congress leadership is anticipating electoral defeat and resorting to political theatrics. Speaking to media, Bhattacharya alleged that the people of West Bengal are growing weary of what he described as repeated political drama by the ruling party. He said that Banerjee's actions reflect an inability to accept the possibility of losing power after years of governance. According to him, the visit to the strongroom was not a genuine concern but a calculated move aimed at shaping public perception ahead of elections.

He further stated that the Trinamool Congress, having been in power for nearly 15 years, must now prepare for a shift in political dynamics. Bhattacharya remarked that the party has benefited from prolonged governance and now faces increasing public scrutiny and dissatisfaction.

The BJP leader also reiterated allegations of widespread corruption under the current administration. He claimed that various sectors, including education, public works, and contracting, have been adversely affected, alleging that irregularities have become deeply embedded in governance structures across the state.

Despite his criticism, Bhattacharya acknowledged Banerjee's personal political journey. He noted that she rose from a modest background and built her career through grassroots activism rather than political inheritance. He suggested that her understanding of the state's socio-political fabric is precisely why she recognises the changing mood among voters.

Referring to a recent remark made by the Chief Minister about the future of her party, Bhattacharya interpreted it as a sign of uncertainty within the Trinamool Congress. He argued that such statements indicate concerns about the party's long-term prospects in the state.

# Boost to Naval Firepower as Sixth Project 17A Ship 'Mahendragiri' Delivered

**MUMBAI**

Mahendragiri, the sixth ship of Nilgiri-class (Project 17A), was delivered to the Indian Navy on Mumbai, marking a significant milestone in achieving self-reliance in warship design and construction, an official said on Friday.

Project 17A frigates are versatile multi-mission platforms designed to address current and emerging challenges in the maritime domain. Project 17A (P17A) of the Indian Navy consists seven advanced stealth guided-missile frigates. The seven ships, known as the Nilgiri-class, are: INS Nilgiri, INS Himgiri, INS Udaygiri, INS Taragiri, INS Vindhyagiri, INS Mahendragiri, and a seventh unnamed ship.

The state-of-the-art frigate Mahendragiri reflects a quantum leap in naval design, stealth, firepower, automation, and survivability, and stands as an admirable symbol of Aatmanirbharta in warship building, said a statement.

Designed by the Warship Design Bureau (WDB) and overseen by the Warship Overseeing Team (Mumbai), P17A frigates reflect a generational leap in indigenous ship design, stealth, survivability, and combat capability. Driven by the philosophy of Integrated Construction, the ship was built and delivered within envisaged timelines.

The P17A ships are fitted with an advanced weapon and sensor suite as compared to the P17 (Shivalik-class).

These ships are configured with Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion plants, comprising a diesel engine and a gas turbine that drive a Controllable Pitch Propeller (CPP) on each shaft, and a state-of-the-art Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS), said the statement. The potent weapon and sensor suite comprises anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare systems, it said.

Mahendragiri is the sixth P17A ship to be delivered to Indian Navy in the span of less than 17 months from the delivery of the first P17A (Nilgiri) by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL), on December 20, 2024, said the statement. Delivery of Mahendragiri showcases the design, shipbuilding, and engineering prowess of the nation, and reflects Navy's unrelenting focus on Aatmanirbharta in both ship design and shipbuilding.

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ಮೈಸೂರು ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ– 571105.
Phone/Fax:08222-252211, eeharangi@yahoo.co.in

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 03/2026–27
ದಿನಾಂಕ:30.04.2026 (ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟ್‌ಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ)

ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು, ಕಾವೇರಿ ನೀರಾವರಿ ನಿಗಮ ನಿಯಮಿತ ಇವರ ಪರವಾಗಿ KTPP ಅಧಿನಿಯಮ–1999 ನಿಯಮಗಳು 2000 ರ ನಿಯಮಗಳಂತೆ ಸ್ಟಾಂಡರ್ಡ ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್ KW-1 ರನ್ವಯ 5 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ, KW-4 ರನ್ವಯ 1 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ ಹಾಗೂ KC-3 ರನ್ವಯ 1 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಅರ್ಹ ವರ್ಗದ ನೊಂದಾಯಿತ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ **ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟ್‌ಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗೆ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕಡೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ:11.05.2026 ಸಾ:4.00 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ಬಿಡ್ಡು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ:12.05.2026 ರ ಸಾ:4.30 ಗಂಟೆ ನಂತರ ನಿಗಧಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.** ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ನಿಗಧಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿಯನ್ನು ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟ್‌ಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ನಮೂದಿಸಿರುವ ಯಾವುದಾದರೊಂದು ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ **ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟ್‌ಲ್** ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/kppp**ನಲ್ಲಿ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 04.05.2026 ರಿಂದ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದು.** ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯ ಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್,
ನಂ.2 ಹಾರಂಗಿ ಬಲದಂಡೆ ನಾಲಾ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಹುಣಸೂರು
DIPR/DD/MYS/125/KSMCA/109/2026-27

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**THE SPECIAL OFFICER AND COMPETENT AUTHORITY,**
**(UNDER KPIDFE - IMA & OTHER SCAM)**
3rd Floor, Podium Block, V.V Tower, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560001

**NOTICE/INVITATION FOR E-AUCTION FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

Pursuant to attachment of Immovable properties by the Government under the provisions of the Karnataka Protection of Interest of Depositors in Financial Establishments Act, 2004 (KPIDFE Act) and pursuant to the absolute attachment order by the Hon'ble Special Court, the Special Officer & Competent Authority is issuing notice for e-auction of the immovable property through e-auction on 'as is where is and whatever there is basis'.
The intending bidders will be required to furnish Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (as mentioned against each auction in the e-portal provided by the Service Provider/Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only).

**Short description of the Immovable Property (SPLOCA/AUC(2)/CR/03/2025-26)**

**Properties are free of all encumbrances and are in the name of Competent Authority appointed by Government and confirmed by the Special Court under KPIDFE Act, 2004. and Hon'ble High Court Of Karnataka has cleared the title (Khata stands in the name of Competent Authority and Auctioning Authority)**

| Sl. No. | DETAILS OF THE SCHEDULE PROPERTY (Clear Title by Court in order No. MISC No. 688/2019) | Minimum Bid Price (Rs) | EMD (Rs) | Bid Increase Value (Rs) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | # 48, PID No. 64-86-48, 30th Cross, Bannerughatta Road, ward No: 46, Thilakanagar, Bengaluru- 560041. Measuring North to South 40 ft, East to West 90+95/2 ft Total 3500 Sq.ft Location: https://maps.app.goo.gl/ WT1vyZFt135vgjKv7 | | | |
| (a) | Ground Floor-1, Flat No.GF-01, UDS-417.53, SBA-1593.75 Sq.ft | 1,30,04,550/- | 13,00,000/- | 1,30,000/- |
| (b) | Ground Floor-2, Flat No.GF-02, UDS-417.53, SBA-1593.75 Sq.ft | 1,30,04,550/- | 13,00,000/- | 1,30,000/- |
| (c) | 1st Floor-1, Flat No.FF-01, UDS-417.53, SBA-1593.75 Sq.ft | 1,31,41,350/- | 13,15,000/- | 1,32,000/- |
| (d) | 1st Floor-2, Flat No.FF-02, UDS-417.53, SBA-1593.75 Sq.ft | 1,31,41,350/- | 13,15,000/- | 1,32,000/- |
| (e) | 2nd Floor-1, Flat No.SF-01, UDS-417.53, SBA-1593.75 Sq.ft | 1,32,69,600/- | 13,27,000/- | 1,33,000/- |
| (f) | 2nd Floor-2, Flat No.SF-02, UDS-417.53, SBA-1593.75 Sq.ft | 1,32,69,600/- | 13,27,000/- | 1,33,000/- |
| (g) | 3 rd Floor Merged Flat, Flat No.TF-01, UDS-835.06, SBA-3187.50 sq.ft | 2,60,79,210/- | 26,08,000/- | 2,61,000/- |
| (h) | 4th Floor, Office Space, UDS 359.77, SBA-1500 Sq.ft | 1,23,12,000/- | 12,32,000/- | 1,24,000/- |

| Date of Pre-bid meeting & time and Place | Date of Inspection & time | Last Date of Submission of Bids & EMD submission | Date & Time of E Auction |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14th May 2026, 3 pm to 4 pm Place: O/o SPLOCA, 3rd Floor, Podium Block, Visveswariah Tower, Bengaluru-01 | 15th May 2026 11:00am to 01:00pm | 26th May 2026 Before 5pm | 29th May 2026 11 am to 1 pm |

For Registration & Online Auction, you can login to: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** (Helpdesk No: 080-46010000, 080-68948777) The interested bidders who require auction related information can contact Assistant Commissioner, Office of the Special Officer & Competent Authority, 3rd Floor, Podium Block, Visveswariah Towers, Dr.Ambedkar Veedi, Bengaluru-560001, e-mail ID: **splocaeauction@gmail.com** or Contact Mob. No 9945515174.

**Sd/-**
**Special Officer & Competent Authority**
**(IMA & Other Scam), Bengaluru.**

**Date: 30-04-2026**
**Place: Bengaluru**
DIPR/CP/436/Zen/2026-27

## QUICK READ

### India's new strategic maritime hub takes shape at Great Nicobar

**New Delhi**

The Great Nicobar Project, work on which is underway, aims to transform the Great Nicobar into a strategic maritime and economic hub by leveraging its proximity to the global East–West shipping route and reducing dependence on foreign transshipment ports keeping in view India's defence and national security, an official statement said on Friday. The project, which will strengthen India's strategic presence in the Andaman Sea and Southeast Asia, seeks to balance port-led economic growth with calibrated environmental safeguards and protection of indigenous communities.

### Lt Gen Balbir Singh takes charge of Chinar Corps

**Srinagar**

Lt General Balbir Singh on Friday assumed charge as the General Officer Commanding of the Srinagar-based strategic 15 Corps, also known as the Chinar Corps, succeeding Lt General Prashant Srivastava. Lt Gen Srivastava handed over command after a 19-month tenure marked by major counter-terror and counter-infiltration operations, including Operation Sindoor and Operation Mahadev. A battle-hardened officer with over 34 years of service, Lt Gen Balbir Singh has extensive experience in counter-insurgency operations across Jammu and Kashmir and the North East. He had earlier commanded the Counter Insurgency Force (Victor) in South Kashmir. He pledged close coordination with civil authorities to strengthen peace and stability in Kashmir.

# President praises Army training excellence at ARTRAC visit

President Droupadi Murmu visited the Headquarters of the Army Training Command in Shimla on Friday, commending its vital role in strengthening the operational readiness and future capabilities of the Indian Army

**SHIMLA**

During her visit to Army Training Command in Shimla, the President was received by Kavinder Gupta, Governor of Himachal Pradesh, along with Lieutenant General Devendra Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of ARTRAC. The visit highlighted the strategic importance of the command in shaping the professional and operational standards of the Indian Army.

Officials briefed the President on the evolution of ARTRAC and its central role in delivering advanced training to Army personnel. The command focuses on enhancing operational efficiency, developing modern warfare strategies, and strengthening institutional capabilities across the force.

Lieutenant General Devendra Sharma outlined several innovative initiatives undertaken by ARTRAC. These include expanded training in drone operations, the adoption of niche and emerging technologies, and the introduction of Red Teaming, a concept designed to test strategies and improve decision-making by simulating adversarial scenarios. Efforts toward digitisation and automation within the Army were also highlighted as key priorities.

President Murmu acknowledged ARTRAC's comprehensive contribution to military development, including its involvement in designing warfare concepts, resource planning, and collaboration with friendly foreign nations and sister services. She described the command as a critical component in advancing national goals such as self-reliance and a stronger defense framework.

ARTRAC oversees 32 premier training institutions, playing a pivotal role in maintaining high standards of professionalism within the Indian Army. Its wide-ranging responsibilities provide a unique perspective on both the art and science of modern warfare.

During her interaction with senior officials, the President emphasized the importance of continuous innovation in military training to ensure national security. She encouraged the command to sustain its efforts in enhancing preparedness and adapting to evolving global security challenges.

Commending the dedication of ARTRAC personnel and defense civilians, President Murmu urged them to continue their work with renewed commitment and enthusiasm. She also praised the command's contribution to fostering innovation and preparing future-ready leaders, underlining its significance in building a strong and secure nation.

# 'Maharashtra to Drive India's Growth with $1 Trillion Contribution Goal'

**MUMBAI**

**Jishnu Dev Varma, Governor of Maharashtra, on Friday said the state is poised to play a central role in achieving India's long-term economic ambitions, announcing a target contribution of $1 trillion toward the nation's growth vision**

Speaking at the Maharashtra Day celebrations held at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Park, the Governor emphasized that the state would be a key driver in fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of transforming India into a $5 trillion economy. He expressed confidence that the state's roadmap, titled Viksit Maharashtra 2047, will accelerate development and position Maharashtra as a leader in economic progress.

Highlighting the broader national vision of Vikasit Bharat 2047, the Governor called upon citizens across all sectors to actively contribute toward building an inclusive and advanced society. He stressed that Maharashtra's economic strength and strategic initiatives would be instrumental in shaping India's future.

The Governor pointed to Maharashtra's rising stature as a global investment destination. He noted that Memorandums of Understanding worth Rs 31.25 lakh crore were signed at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Additionally, the state's new industrial policy aims to attract investments worth Rs 70.5 lakh crore, with the potential to generate up to 50 lakh direct jobs. To facilitate global investments, a dedicated Foreign Direct Investment desk has been established within the Protocol Department to streamline administrative processes.

Infrastructure development remains a major focus area for the state government. The Governor highlighted the approval of the Public-Private Partnership Policy 2026, developed by Maharashtra Institution for Transformation (MITRA), aimed at boosting infrastructure projects and economic efficiency. Among key projects, the Navi Mumbai International Airport is expected to emerge as a major aviation hub. The fully operational Mumbai Metro Line 3 (Aqua Line) is set to enhance urban mobility, while a 340-kilometre waterway network is being developed across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

The Governor also highlighted the development of Vadhavan Port, which is projected to become India's largest port and generate over 12 lakh direct jobs, significantly boosting trade and logistics capacity.

Focusing on agriculture, he reaffirmed the government's commitment to farmers' welfare.

*The Central Bureau of Investigation has arrested two officials from the Central Govt Health Scheme in Meerut for allegedly accepting a bribe to facilitate a staff transfer, officials confirmed on Friday*

# CBI Arrests CGHS Officials in Meerut Bribery Case

**MEERUT**

The accused have been identified as Natasha Verma, Additional Director at the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) in Meerut, and her private assistant, Sunny. According to investigators, the case was registered on April 30 following a complaint alleging that a bribe of Rs 80,000 was being demanded to facilitate the transfer of a CGHS employee from Moradabad to Meerut.

Acting on the complaint, the CBI conducted a trap operation after verifying the allegations. During the operation, both accused allegedly agreed to accept a reduced bribe amount of Rs 50,000 from the complainant. Officials said the private assistant was caught red-handed while accepting the money on behalf of the Additional Director.

Following the successful trap, both Natasha Verma and her assistant were taken into custody. Investigators stated that the bribe was sought in exchange for processing the staff transfer, suggesting misuse of official authority within the department.

The arrests were made as part of standard anti-corruption procedures, which include verification of complaints and carefully monitored trap operations to ensure credible evidence. The agency indicated that such actions are part of ongoing efforts to curb corruption in government institutions.

Officials further said that the accused will be produced before a competent court, where the CBI is likely to seek custody for further interrogation. The investigation remains ongoing, with authorities examining whether other officials were involved in similar practices.

The case has once again highlighted concerns about corruption within administrative systems and the need for strict enforcement measures to ensure transparency and accountability in public services.

# Foreign delegates highlight semiconductor, renewable energy opportunities at VGRC in Surat

**SURAT**

Foreign delegates at the two-day Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conference (VGRC) - South Gujarat in Surat, which commenced on Friday, highlighted growing international interest in the state's industrial ecosystem.

Representatives from Russia and Japan pointed to growing opportunities in sectors such as semiconductors and renewable energy.

Aleksandr Fursov, Deputy Consul General of Russia in Mumbai, said the conference reflects the depth of economic ties between the two countries.

Russia and India have a long-standing tradition of bilateral economic cooperation. We always view conferences like Vibrant Gujarat as a great opportunity for business people to meet each other, get to know each other better, and learn about the opportunities each country has and is ready to offer to its partners, he told IANS.

A delegate from Japan, Onio, underlined Gujarat's growing role in emerging industries.

Today I joined this conference as a speaker in the Japan session to introduce our organisation. From my understanding, the semiconductor industry is a very important and rapidly growing sector here in Gujarat. Also, Gujarat is known as the state with the highest solar panel installations in India, he said.

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel inaugurated VGRC in Surat.

The two-day event, being held on May 1 and 2 at Auro University, is part of the state government's effort to extend the Vibrant Gujarat model to regional hubs and promote localised investment opportunities.

The conference is being held alongside the Vibrant Gujarat Regional Exhibition (VGRE), bringing together industries, MSMEs, startups and government bodies from districts across South Gujarat, including Surat, Bharuch, Navsari, Valsad, Tapi and Dang.

It features seminars, sector-focused discussions, business-to-business and business-to-government meetings, as well as a reverse buyer-seller meet aimed at facilitating partnerships.

# Experts probe CDV source after five big cats die in Kanha reserve

**BHOPAL**

The heart of India's wildlife conservation framework has been shaken by the devastating deaths of Tigress T141 and her entire litter of four cubs at the Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh in a span of just nine days. Preliminary investigations have pointed towards the Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) as the likely cause of the deaths and veterinarians and wildlife forensic experts are working to confirm the source of the deadly outbreak.

The deaths of Tigress T141 and her four cubs has raised alarms regarding a potential biological crisis in what is traditionally considered one of the nation's most secure tiger habitats.

According to reports and sources the tragic events began unfolding on April 21 when the first cub was found dead in the Amahi Nala area, followed shortly by the discovery of a second cub in a decomposed state on April 24.

By April 26, a third cub had succumbed to the mysterious illness, prompting an emergency rescue operation for the mother and her final surviving offspring.

On April 27, the critically-ill Tigress T141 and her last cub were moved to the Mukki Quarantine Centre for intensive care.

While a brief glimmer of hope appeared on April 28 when both animals showed signs of improvement and began to consume food, the situation took a tragic turn on Tuesday night.

Their condition deteriorated rapidly, leading to the death of the tigress on Wednesday morning and the eventual loss of her last cub too. Preliminary investigations have pointed towards the dreaded Canine Distemper Virus as the likely cause for the entire family being wiped out.

The Canine Distemper Virus is a pathogen regarded by experts as one of the most dangerous viral threats to tiger populations due to its highly contagious nature and high mortality rate. An exhaustive investigation is currently underway and veterinarians and wildlife forensic experts are working to confirm the source of the outbreak.

The carcass of the third cub has been transported to the School of Wildlife Forensic and Health in Jabalpur, while blood and tissue samples from the tigress and the last surviving cub are being analysed at specialised laboratories.

# Nitish Kumar vacates Bihar CM residence on Buddha Purnima

**PATNA**

The iconic 1 Anne Marg, the official residence of the Chief Minister of Bihar, witnessed a significant political transition on Friday, symbolising a shift in the state's power dynamics.

Long considered the nerve centre of political authority in Bihar, 1 Anne Marg has been closely associated with the state's leadership and governance. Over the decades, the residence has served as the official home to successive chief ministers, making it a powerful symbol of political continuity and influence.

Friday's development marked a historic moment as the residence saw a transition reflecting broader changes in Bihar's political landscape. While details of the transition were not immediately disclosed, the significance of the event lies in its symbolic value, representing a shift in leadership and administrative control.

Located in the capital city of Patna, 1 Anne Marg has often been at the centre of political narratives in the state. The residence has hosted crucial meetings, policy decisions, and high-level discussions that have shaped Bihar's governance over the years.

Political observers view the transition as an important indicator of evolving power structures within the state. Such changes often reflect shifts in public mandate, party dynamics, or leadership strategies, and can have far-reaching implications for governance and policy direction.

**GUJARAT PRO-INCUMBENCY**

# *Gujarat Shows Shift to Pro-Incumbency Politics: PM*

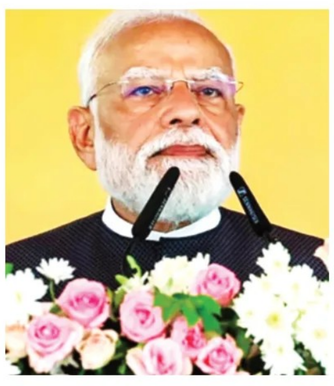
**GANDHINAGAR**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said Gujarat has demonstrated a transition from anti-incumbency to pro-incumbency politics, highlighting sustained public support for development-oriented governance. In a letter to Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on the state's 66th foundation day, he credited consistent electoral victories to effective governance and citizen-focused policies.

In his message, the Prime Minister extended greetings to the people of Gujarat and described the occasion as significant, particularly in light of recent local self-government election results. He stated that the outcome reflects public approval of the state government's efforts to accelerate development and improve the quality of life for citizens.

Modi noted that while political discourse often revolves around anti-incumbency sentiments, Gujarat has set a contrasting example by consistently supporting incumbent governments. According to him, this shift indicates growing trust among voters in leadership that delivers tangible progress and remains responsive to public needs.

He further highlighted that since 1995, his party has received uninterrupted support



in the state across multiple elections. This continuity, he said, has ensured political stability, which is crucial for long-term development planning and execution. Stable governance, he added, enables the implementation of large-scale reforms and infrastructure projects that benefit the wider population.

The Prime Minister also paid tribute to those who played a role in the formation of Gujarat and the Mahagujarat movement, acknowledging their lasting influence on the state's identity and progress. He said their contributions continue to inspire future generations and serve as a reminder of collective responsibility toward development.

Describing Gujarat as a land where tradition and modernity coexist, Modi emphasised its strong entrepreneurial culture and leading manufacturing capacity in India. He pointed out that the state's name has gained recognition across the country, reflecting its economic and cultural prominence.

Referring to resilience, he cited the example of the Somnath Temple, which has been rebuilt multiple times despite historical destruction, symbolising faith and perseverance. He also mentioned his upcoming visit to commemorate 75 years of the temple's re-consecration in 1951.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that Gujarat had faced challenges in the past, including periods of instability and social tensions, but praised the people for overcoming these difficulties.

# Strait Tensions Deepen as Gulf States Question Iran's Intentions

## A senior United Arab Emirates official has voiced strong doubts about Iran's credibility in managing the Strait of Hormuz

**WASHINGTON**

Concerns over stability in the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz intensified on Friday after a top United Arab Emirates official warned that Tehran could not be trusted to handle any unilateral arrangements in the region. The remarks come as efforts to resolve the ongoing conflict involving Iran remain stalled, despite a temporary ceasefire that has done little to ease tensions.

Two months into the war, the crucial maritime corridor remains largely closed due to an Iranian blockade, while the United States Navy continues to restrict Iranian oil exports.

The disruption has severely impacted global markets, cutting off nearly 20 percent of the world's oil and gas supply.

As a result, international energy prices have surged, raising fears of a broader economic slowdown.

Although a ceasefire was implemented on April 8, uncertainty persists.

Reports that Donald Trump could approve new military strikes to pressure Iran into negotiations pushed oil prices to a four-year high earlier this week.

Iranian officials, however, have signaled readiness for escalation, activating air defense systems and preparing for a potential short but intense military confrontation. Sources indicate that any U.S. strike could be followed by action from Israel.

The conflict has already seen significant military exchanges. Following joint airstrikes by the United States and Israel in late February, Iran retaliated by targeting U.S. bases and associated infrastructure across Gulf states. Meanwhile, Hezbollah launched missile attacks against Israel, prompting further retaliatory strikes on Lebanese territory.

Amid rising tensions, UAE presidential adviser Anwar Gargash emphasized that international law and collective global efforts must ensure safe navigation through the strait. He warned that Iran's previous actions against neighboring countries undermine any confidence in its commitments.

Diplomatic efforts have also hit a roadblock. While Pakistan has attempted to mediate, no new talks have been scheduled. Thousands have reportedly died in the conflict, primarily in Iran and Lebanon.

Adding to the uncertainty, President Trump faces a deadline under the War Powers Resolution to either conclude the conflict or justify its continuation before Congress. However, officials suggest the deadline may pass without significant developments, as the administration argues that hostilities effectively ended with the April ceasefire; despite ongoing instability in the region.

# Transatlantic Strains Rise as Trump Targets European Leaders

**WASHINGTON**

**Tensions between the United States and Europe have escalated sharply in recent weeks, as U.S. President Donald Trump launched a series of pointed criticisms and threats against key European allies.**

European leaders are reportedly increasingly concerned by the unpredictable tone and policy direction of President Trump, whose recent remarks have strained diplomatic ties across the continent. In a sharp rebuke, Trump criticized German Chancellor Friedrich Merz over his stance on the Iran war, calling him totally ineffective. He further escalated tensions by threatening to withdraw approximately 36,400 U.S. troops stationed in Germany, a move that could significantly alter Europe's security landscape.

The criticism did not stop there. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer was also targeted in unusually personal terms, with Trump remarking that he is not Winston Churchill. He additionally warned of imposing steep tariffs on imports from the United Kingdom, raising fears of a potential trade dispute between long-standing allies.

Perhaps most alarming for European policymakers are signals from the United States Department of Defense suggesting punitive measures against NATO members perceived as insufficiently supportive of U.S. military operations in Iran. Among the proposals under discussion are suspending Spain from the NATO alliance and reconsidering U.S. recognition of the Falkland Islands as a British territory.

Diplomatic sources across Europe describe the atmosphere as tense and unpredictable. One European diplomat said the situation is unnerving, noting that governments are preparing for sudden policy shifts from Washington. The renewed friction has drawn comparisons to the early phase of Trump's presidency, when relations with European allies were frequently strained.

Some officials are looking to past experience for guidance. A second diplomat pointed to former German Chancellor Angela Merkel as an example of how to manage relations with Trump. Merkel, who had a notably difficult relationship with the U.S. president during his earlier term, adopted a strategy of patience and restraint.

According to the diplomat, European leaders have learned that immediate reactions often worsen tensions. Instead, they are advised to maintain firm positions while allowing political storms to subside. Attempts at flattery, once seen as a potential diplomatic tool, have proven ineffective, with even conciliatory leaders facing criticism.

## Azerbaijan summons EU envoy in row over treatment of Karabakh Armenians

**BAKU**

Azerbaijan summoned the EU's ambassador on Friday to protest against a European Parliament resolution, opens new tab condemning Baku's detention of Armenian prisoners of war and backing the rights of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh.

The resolution denounced what it called Azerbaijan's unjust detention of Armenian prisoners of war, detainees and hostages and demanded their immediate release. It also reiterated the European Union's support for the rights of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and called for accountability for the destruction of their cultural and religious heritage.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry dismissed the resolution as unfounded and biased, saying Karabakh Armenians had left the region voluntarily. It said those described by the EU as prisoners of war had committed serious crimes, including war crimes.

Ethnic Armenians in Karabakh, an internationally recognised part of Azerbaijan, broke away from Baku's control as the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991. Azerbaijan and Armenia fought two wars over the mountainous territory before Baku took it back in 2023 and its entire ethnic Armenian population of around 100,000 people fled to neighbouring Armenia.

Karabakh officials captured at that time were placed on trial in Baku in January 2025, accused of a battery of charges including war crimes. International human rights groups have raised concerns about the fairness of the trial.

In February, Ruben Vardanyan, an Armenian-born billionaire banker who served as a senior official in Nagorno-Karabakh, was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

*More than 100 pro-Palestinian activists attempting to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza were detained and taken to the Greek island of Crete after Israeli forces intercepted their vessels*

# ACTIVISTS DETAINED AFTER GAZA AID FLOTILLA SEIZED NEAR GREECE

**ATHERINOLAKKOS**

The activists were part of the Global Sumud flotilla, a civilian-led effort aimed at breaking Israel's blockade of Gaza Strip and delivering essential supplies to its residents. The convoy of ships had departed from Barcelona on April 12, carrying food, medical aid, and other humanitarian materials.

According to organisers, Israeli naval forces intercepted at least 22 vessels late on Wednesday in international waters near the Peloponnese peninsula, a region of Greece located hundreds of miles from Gaza. On Friday, 168 activists were transferred from Israeli custody onto Greek vessels and taken to Crete, where they were received by local authorities. Two activists reportedly remained in Israeli custody.

Despite the seizure, organisers stated that dozens of other boats—approximately 47—remain in the Mediterranean Sea near southern Crete and are expected to regroup before continuing their journey toward Gaza. Each vessel is said to be carrying around one ton of humanitarian supplies.

The Israeli government strongly criticized the flotilla, with its foreign ministry labeling organisers as professional provocateurs. Meanwhile, international reactions have been mixed. Foreign ministries from Germany and Italy issued a joint statement expressing deep concern over the developments. The United States Department of State warned it could impose consequences on individuals or groups supporting the flotilla, alleging links to Hamas—a claim activists strongly deny.

Participants in the flotilla argue that their mission is purely humanitarian and aimed at supporting Palestinian civilians, not political or militant causes. They accuse Israel and the United States of conflating advocacy for Palestinian rights with support for extremist groups.

This is not the first such attempt. In a similar incident last October, Israeli forces intercepted another flotilla organized by the same group, detaining over 450 participants, including Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg.

Humanitarian conditions in Gaza remain dire. Despite a ceasefire agreement reached last October that included provisions for increased aid, relief organizations report that supplies are still insufficient. With a population exceeding two million, the majority of Gaza's residents have been displaced, many living in temporary shelters, damaged buildings, or open areas with limited access to food, water, and medical care.

# U.S. Navy Deploys AI to Counter Iranian Mines in Strategic Waterway

**WASHINGTON**

The United States Navy is accelerating the use of artificial intelligence to detect and neutralize Iranian naval mines in the Strait of Hormuz, as tensions in the region continue to threaten global trade and energy supplies.

Amid ongoing instability involving Iran, the United States is stepping up technological efforts to secure one of the world's most critical maritime routes.

The Strait of Hormuz, a narrow passage through which a significant portion of global oil shipments flows, has been at the center of a geopolitical standoff that has disrupted international markets.

President Donald Trump recently stated that U.S. naval forces are actively clearing Iranian mines from the waterway, though experts warn the process could take months due to the complexity of underwater mine detection. The situation persists despite a fragile ceasefire between Washington and Tehran following weeks of conflict.

To speed up operations, the Navy has awarded a contract worth up to $99.7 million to Domino Data Lab, a San Francisco-based artificial intelligence firm. The contract is part of the Navy's broader initiative known as Project AMMO, which aims to modernize mine detection capabilities using advanced machine learning tools.

The new AI platform is designed to train unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) to identify and classify naval mines more efficiently. By integrating data from multiple sensors—including sonar and visual imaging systems—the software allows real-time monitoring of detection accuracy and enables rapid updates to improve performance in the field.

According to Domino Data Lab's Chief Operating Officer, Thomas Robinson, the initiative marks a shift in naval operations. Mine-hunting used to be a job for ships; it is becoming a job for AI, he said, emphasizing the importance of speed and adaptability in high-risk environments.

Previously, updating AI systems to recognize new or unfamiliar mine types could take up to six months. With the new platform, that timeframe has reportedly been reduced to just a few days.

# Trump Returns to Public Events Amid Security Concerns and Political Pressure

**FLORIDA**

U.S. President Donald Trump is set to make his first public appearance outside the White House since a foiled assassination attempt, as he travels to Florida under heightened security and increasing political challenges during his second term.

The president's visit to The Villages, a large retirement community in Florida known for its strong Republican support, marks a significant moment following recent security threats. The trip comes amid growing scrutiny over his safety arrangements after an alleged plot to attack him and other officials was thwarted.

During the visit, Trump is expected to promote new policy measures, including proposed tax deductions for senior citizens and improvements to accessibility within the Social Security Administration. These initiatives are aimed at appealing to older voters, a key demographic in upcoming elections.

However, the president faces mounting political pressure as his approval ratings decline. According to a Reuters/Ipsos poll, more than 60 percent of voters disapprove of his performance, while his approval rating has dropped to 34 percent; matching the lowest level recorded at the end of his first term. That period was marked by the aftermath of the United States Capitol attack January 6, when a mob of his supporters stormed the Capitol following his election loss.

Economic concerns continue to weigh heavily on the administration. Rising fuel prices, driven in part by ongoing tensions involving Iran and a U.S. naval blockade, have pushed gasoline costs to their highest levels in nearly four years. Additionally, recent data from the United States Department of Commerce shows inflation increasing at its fastest pace in three years, adding to public frustration over the cost of living.

Economist Michael Strain of the American Enterprise Institute noted that while broader economic factors contribute to affordability issues, the administration has not effectively addressed voter concerns through policy.

The recent assassination attempt—reportedly the third targeting Trump in less than two years—has further intensified the political atmosphere. Although such incidents have historically led to temporary boosts in presidential approval ratings, it remains unclear whether this will shift public opinion in Trump's favor.

**PROTECT LONDON STABBING TERROR**

# *Man charged with attempted murder after London stabbing*

**LONDON**

A 45-year-old man has been charged with attempted murder following a stabbing attack targeting two Jewish men in north London, an incident that authorities are treating as a suspected act of terrorism amid rising security concerns across the United Kingdom.

The accused, Essa Suleiman, appeared before Westminster Magistrates' Court on Friday in connection with the violent attack that took place in the Golders Green area of north London. Prosecutors charged him with two counts of attempted murder, as well as possession of a bladed weapon.

The victims, identified as 34-year-old Shloime Rand and 76-year-old Moshe Shine, were stabbed during the incident. Authorities confirmed that Rand has since been discharged from hospital, while Shine remains in stable condition. The attack has heightened alarm in the local community, particularly in Golders Green, which is known for its significant Jewish population.

In response to the incident and a series of recent attacks targeting Jewish premises, the United Kingdom raised its national terrorism threat level to the second-highest category. This classification indicates that another attack is considered highly likely within the coming months. Officials believe the stabbings may be linked to broader patterns of targeted violence, prompting urgent security reviews.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned the attack and pledged stronger measures to ensure the safety of Jewish communities across the country. The United Kingdom is home to approximately 290,000 Jewish residents, many of whom have expressed concern over increasing hostility and threats in recent weeks.

Authorities are also reviewing future public demonstrations, including pro-Palestinian marches, which could face tighter restrictions as part of enhanced security measures. The move reflects growing pressure on the government to prevent further violence and maintain public order.

During the court hearing, prosecutor Emma Harraway told the court that Suleiman allegedly carried out another attack earlier the same day in south London, targeting a former acquaintance. This has led to additional charges of attempted murder related to that separate incident.

Suleiman, a British national originally from Somalia, was remanded in custody and is scheduled to appear next at Old Bailey on May 15.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, S SHASHIDHAR S/o KAUNTALA SUBRAMANYAM REDDY R/o 81, 2nd Main, 2nd Phase, West Of Chord Road, Manjunath Nagar, Rajajinagar, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560010, have changed the name of my minor daughter DEEKSHITHA S aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as S DHEEKSHITHA REDDY.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, K M BOPANNA S/o K K MUTHANNA, R/o Kolakeri Village, Napoklu, Madikeri, Kolakeri, Kodagu, Karnataka-571214, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as BHUVAN BOPANNA K M.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, NAVEEN KUMAR S/o SOMU R/o 56, Madduramma Colony, Jayanagara, Bangalore South, Bangalore, Karnataka-560029, have changed the name of my minor daughter HITHAKSHI N aged 4 years and she shall hereafter be known as HUVIKA N.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, RANGANATHA G H S/o HONNEGOWDA R/o Vivekanagara, Gowrikoppalu, Hassan, Vidyanagar (hassan), Karnataka-573202, have changed the name of my minor son REETHESH G R aged 15 years and he shall hereafter be known as SHIVANK R GOWDA.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, Shivaraj S/o Bommanagouda R/o Murkigudda Road, AG Colony, Kyadigera, PO: Kyadigera, District: Raichur, Karnataka-584129, have changed my name to Shivraj Naik.

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, SUJATHA SURESH BABU (old name), a resident of ESTEEM SPLENDOR 2, NO 303, 3RD FLOOR, OPP TO, ADUGODI POLICESTATION, HOSUR ROAD, BENGALURU - 560030, KARNATAKA INDIA, have changed my name to SUJATHA SURESH (NEW Name) vide affidavit dated 30-04-2026, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

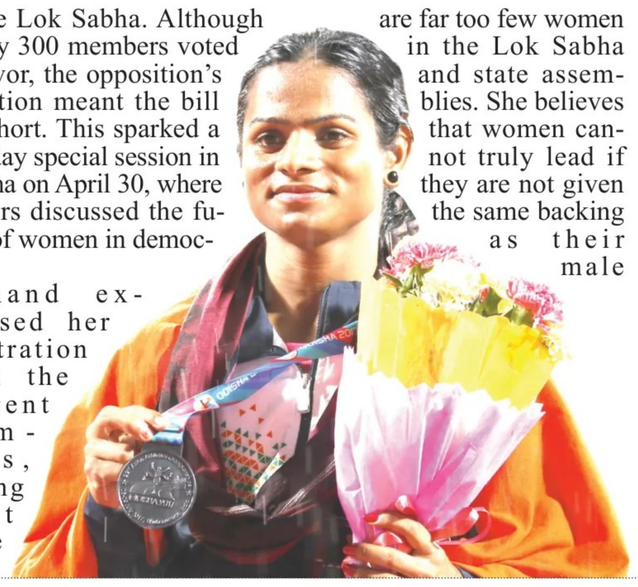
# DUTEE CHAND DEMANDS MORE SUPPORT FOR WOMEN

Olympic sprinter Dutee Chand urged greater political representation for women following the failure of a landmark reservation bill

**BHUBANESWAR**

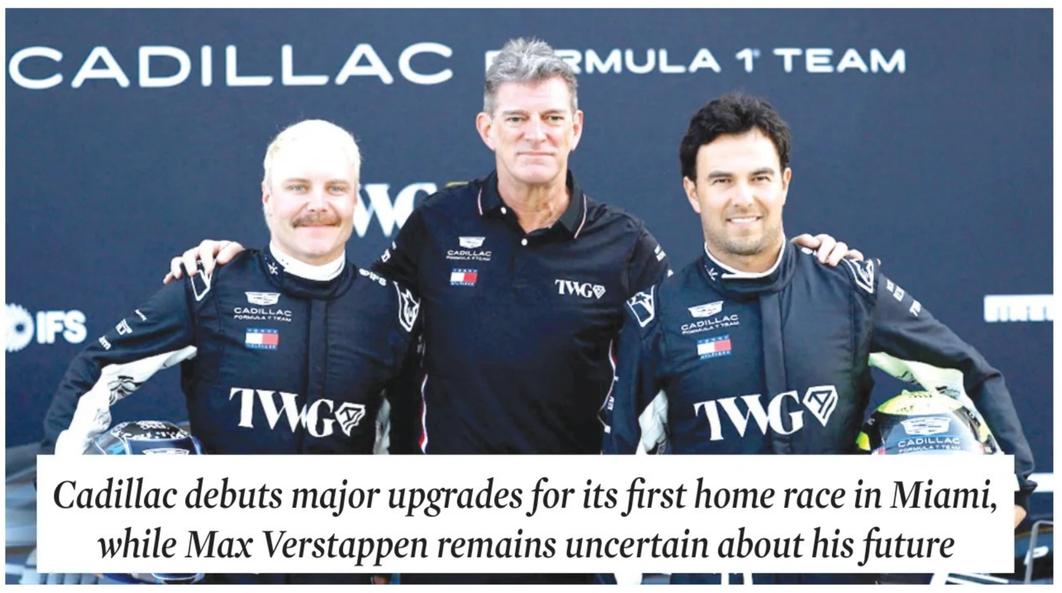
Olympic sprinter Dutee Chand is calling for a major shift in Indian politics, urging for more support and better representation for women. Following a special session of the Odisha Assembly, Chand highlighted that while women are excelling in sports and business, they are still pushed to the sidelines in government.

The debate comes after a tense political showdown in New Delhi. On April 17, a major constitutional bill that aimed to reserve one-third of seats for women failed to pass in the Lok Sabha. Although nearly 300 members voted in favor, the opposition's rejection meant the bill fell short. This sparked a one-day special session in Odisha on April 30, where leaders discussed the future of women in democracy.



Chand expressed her frustration with the current numbers, noting that there are far too few women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. She believes that women cannot truly lead if they are not given the same backing as their male counterparts. "Women are progressing everywhere today," she said, "but in politics, they do not get the support they deserve."

The failed bill has triggered a massive political row. The BJP has accused other parties of blocking progress, even organizing marches to protest the decision. Meanwhile, Chand remains focused on the human side of the issue. She insists that for India to truly move forward, women must have a seat at the table where the biggest decisions are made. For her, this isn't just about politics, it's about basic fairness.




*Cadillac debuts major upgrades for its first home race in Miami, while Max Verstappen remains uncertain about his future*

# NEW CADILLAC TEAM READY FOR MIAMI HEAT

**MIAMI**

The roar of engines at the Hard Rock Stadium carries a special significance this weekend as Cadillac, Formula One's newest team, prepares for its first-ever home race. Backed by General Motors, the American squad is looking to make a big splash at the Miami Grand Prix with a major car makeover designed to boost their speed.

Team boss Graeme Lowdon confirmed the team has brought a "sizeable" upgrade package to Florida. The changes focus on the car's floor, wings, and brakes, aiming to make the vehicle lighter and more aerodynamic. After several races in the Middle East were canceled, the team used the unexpected break to fine-tune these parts away from the pressure of the track.

Drivers Valtteri Bottas and Sergio Perez are optimistic about the weekend. While the team is still hunting for its first championship point, they have already outperformed some seasoned rivals like Aston Martin. Bottas noted that the car has felt smoother with every race, and he hopes these new American-made improvements will allow them to leapfrog the competition.

Beyond the track, Cadillac is leaning into its roots. The cars will sport a special U.S.-themed look for the event, and the team is shifting its hiring focus to recruit more talent from within the United States. Lowdon says the fans are already responding to the American spirit they bring to the grid. For Cadillac, Miami isn't just another race; it is the beginning of a long-term journey to the top.

## Verstappen delays decision, calls rules changes weak

Max Verstappen said he is not rushing to decide his future in Formula One and described recent rule changes as minor. Speaking before the Miami Grand Prix, the Red Bull driver said he still has time to think about what comes next. The four-time world champion has been critical of the sport's new engine plans and hinted he could leave if things do not improve. Uncertainty grew after news that his race engineer, Gianpiero Lambiase, will join McLaren in the future. Verstappen said the move would not affect his decision and added he would adapt. He also said recent rule updates, introduced after race disruptions, were only a small step and not enough to bring major change. The changes aim to improve safety and energy use, but Verstappen believes more action is needed.

# FIFA chief insists Iran will play in USA

**ZURICH**

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has confirmed that Iran will "of course" participate in the upcoming World Cup and play their scheduled matches in the United States. Despite rising political tensions between the two nations, Infantino stressed that his primary responsibility is to "bring people together" through the power of football.

The situation became complicated following the death of Iran's Supreme Leader, which led to calls for Iran's fixtures to be moved to Mexico or Canada. There was even speculation that Italy might replace them. However, during a meeting in Vancouver, Infantino dismissed these rumors. He made it clear that there are no grounds to expel Iran and that the tournament's 48-team format remains unchanged.

The drama intensified when Iranian delegates were initially denied entry into Canada for a FIFA meeting. While Canada called the incident "unintentional," the Iranian team skipped the event in protest. US President Donald Trump also weighed in, expressing safety concerns earlier in the week. However, after Infantino's firm stance, Trump told reporters he is now "okay" with the team competing on American soil.

Iran is currently placed in Group G and is set to face New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15. While Iran's Sports Minister says a final decision depends on "security conditions," FIFA has ruled out relocating any matches. As the June 11 kickoff approaches, the football world is watching closely to see if diplomacy can win out over political friction on the pitch.

# Twelve Indian shooters set for world cup

**NEW DELHI**

A talented twelve-member Indian shotgun squad is headed to Almaty, Kazakhstan, for the second stage of the ISSF World Cup. The prestigious ten-day event started, bringing together nearly 300 elite athletes from 42 different countries to compete for Olympic glory.

The Indian team features three prominent Olympians who will be making their first international appearance of the year. Senior professional Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Anantjeet Singh Naruka will lead the challenge in the men's skeet, while Raiza Dhillon will represent the nation in the women's skeet. In addition to the main squad, eight other Indian shooters are traveling to gain valuable ranking points. The competition schedule is packed, starting with skeet qualifiers, followed by the finals. Fans will have to wait until next weekend for the trap events, with the mixed team final closing out the tournament on May 10.

Success will not come easy for the Indian contingent. They face stiff competition from traditional powerhouses like Italy, China, and the Czech Republic. Host nation Kazakhstan also boasts a strong lineup, and Russian athletes will be competing under a neutral flag. After starting their international season in Morocco back in March, the Indian shooters are under pressure to perform. This tournament serves as a vital testing ground to see if India's best can hit their marks and secure a place on the podium against the world's finest marksmen.

## Monty Desai named Canada's new head coach

**TORONTO**

Cricket Canada has officially appointed Monty Desai as the head coach of its men's national team. This strategic move, aims to boost the country's performance on the global stage following their recent appearance in the 2026 T20 World Cup.

Desai is a veteran coach with over 20 years of experience. He is best known for his remarkable work with Nepal and Afghanistan, where he helped transform those teams into competitive forces. Under his leadership, Nepal regained its ODI status and qualified for major global events. Cricket Canada officials believe his ability to build discipline and long-term plans is exactly what the team needs to find consistent success.

The President of Cricket Canada, Arvinder Khosa, stated that restoring the nation's cricketing prominence is the board's top priority. He noted that Desai's track record with Associate nations makes him the perfect fit to lead Canada through upcoming international qualifiers.

## India dominates table tennis to reach stage two

**LONDON**

India's men's and women's table tennis teams have stormed into the second stage of the World Team Championships after a flawless performance in London. Both squads finished at the top of their groups, securing dominant victories in their final opening-round matches at the OVO Arena, Wembley.

The Indian women's team was in peak form, crushing Rwanda with a 3-0 scoreline. Star Olympian Manika Batra set a fierce pace, losing only nine points in a total demolition of her opponent. Teammate Diya Chitale followed with another swift victory before young talent Syndrela Das sealed the win. This follows earlier successes against Ukraine and a walkover against Uganda, leaving the women's side undefeated as they head into the next round.

The men's team mirrored this success with a clinical 3-0 sweep over Guatemala. Veteran Sathiyan Gnanasekaran led from the front with a straight-sets win, followed by a composed performance from Manav Thakkar. Payas Jain delivered the final blow to ensure the men also finished atop their group. Earlier wins against Tunisia and Slovakia proved that the Indian men are serious contenders in this year's tournament.

The championships feature 64 nations battling for the global crown, with the finals set for May 10. By topping their respective tables, India has avoided tougher early draws in the knockout phase. With the top players finding their rhythm early, the nation's hopes for a podium finish have never looked stronger as the competition moves to the high-stakes second stage.

## Expert claims Maradona struggled with mental health

**BUENOS AIRES**

A psychologist testifying in the trial over Diego Maradona's death shared deeply personal details about the soccer legend's mental health. Carlos Diaz told an Argentine court that the iconic captain suffered from bipolar disorder and narcissism. These revelations come as Diaz and six others face serious charges of manslaughter related to Maradona's passing.

Diaz, who began treating the star just weeks before he died in 2020, described a man of extremes. He told the court that while Maradona could bring an entire nation to its knees with his talent, a single glass of alcohol could do the same to him. The psychologist's plan for the star was strict, total abstinence from drinking. Diaz recalled being shocked during their first meeting, seeing Maradona drinking wine on a couch, which reminded him of his own father's battle with addiction.

The trial is investigating whether the medical team provided improper care. Diaz defended his actions, noting that toxicology reports showed Maradona had been clean from drugs for over three weeks before he passed away. Meanwhile, neurosurgeon Leopoldo Luque also testified, insisting that the home care provided to the 60-year-old was appropriate for his needs at the time.

Maradona, who famously led Argentina to a World Cup victory in 1986, died shortly after undergoing brain surgery. As the legal battle continues, the court is working to decide if his doctors are criminally responsible for the loss of one of the world's greatest sporting heroes.

# Premier league partners with Dream Sports to boost Indian football

**MUMBAI**

The Premier League is doubling down on its mission to transform Indian football through a new strategic partnership with the Dream Sports Foundation (DSF). Hrishikesh Shende, Managing Director of Premier League India, announced that the world's most-watched football league will provide technical expertise and coaching mentorship for the upcoming Dream Sports Championship, set to kick off in Goa on May 3.

Since opening a dedicated office in Mumbai last year, the Premier League has shifted its focus toward long-term grassroots development. This latest collaboration will see Premier League experts conducting high-impact workshops and masterclasses for Indian coaches. These sessions aren't just about tactics, they will cover everything from physical conditioning and sports psychology to leadership and training methodologies used by top English academies.

Neel Shah, CEO of Dream Sports Foundation, emphasized that unlocking India's potential requires a "strong focus on both player and coach development." By professionalizing the support staff and improving the quality of training at the youth level, the partnership aims to build a sustainable ecosystem for the sport in India. As the tournament in Goa approaches, the collaboration signals a major step forward in bringing world-class footballing knowledge to the Indian heartlands.

### Key highlights of the partnership include:

- Coach Development: Masterclasses for staff involved in the Under-16 AIFF Junior League and the Dream Sports Championship.
- Knowledge Exchange: Sharing global best practices to elevate the standard of Indian football academies.
- Player Pathways: Creating clear routes for young talent to compete and learn at international standards.

## Indian men aim for Thomas Cup semis

**HORSENS**

The Indian men's badminton team is set for a high-stakes quarterfinal clash against Chinese Taipei in Denmark. After finishing as runners-up in their group, the 2022 champions are determined to fight their way back to the podium in this prestigious global tournament.

India's journey to the knockouts has been a mix of dominance and narrow escapes. They started the competition with powerful wins over Canada and Australia, proving they are still a force to be reckoned with. However, they faced a minor setback in their final group match, losing a tight 3-2 contest to defending champions China. Despite that loss, stars like Lakshya Sen and the world-class doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty remain in excellent form.

Chinese Taipei will be a difficult hurdle, having topped their own group with impressive victories over Sweden and Denmark. They are known for their resilience and tactical play, making this matchup one of the most anticipated of the round. While the men are flying high, the Indian women's team unfortunately exited the Uber Cup earlier this week after failing to clear the group stage. All eyes are now on the men to uphold the nation's badminton glory. With the finals coming up, the Indian squad knows that every point counts as they chase their second Thomas Cup title in four years.

## QUICK READ

### SpaceX Starship spending surpasses $15 billion development milestone

**Washington**

SpaceX has spent over $15 billion developing its next-generation Starship rocket, according to filings, highlighting Elon Musk's push toward fully reusable spaceflight. The investment far exceeds the roughly $400 million cost of developing Falcon 9, underscoring Starship's scale. It is central to Starlink expansion, enabling higher-capacity satellites for global internet services. NASA has committed funding under Artemis programme for future lunar missions relying on Starship via the Artemis program. Despite progress, technical hurdles remain including refuelling systems, launch infrastructure, and repeated orbital reliability. Experts say airline-like rapid launch capability remains unproven at scale. Development continues with iterative test flights and design improvements across multiple Starship prototypes toward eventual operational readiness.

### Tata Motors overtakes Mahindra in April vehicle sales

New Delhi

Tata Motors edged past Mahindra & Mahindra in India's passenger vehicle market in April 2026, marking a strong start to FY27 for the auto sector. Tata Motors reported 59,701 passenger vehicle sales, up 31.1% year-on-year, driven largely by domestic demand and rapidly growing electric vehicle adoption. EV sales jumped over 72%, highlighting increasing consumer shift toward electric mobility. The company also posted solid commercial vehicle growth, supported by strong demand for small trucks and logistics vehicles. Mahindra & Mahindra recorded 94,627 total vehicle sales, up 14%, with SUV growth of 8% and strong tractor performance rising 21%. However, its passenger vehicle momentum lagged Tata Motors. The results reflect intensifying competition in India's SUV and EV space, where product mix and electrification are becoming key differentiators for market leadership.

### Samsung Biologics union begins first strike over pay

**Seoul**

Unionized workers at Samsung Biologics launched a five-day general strike the first since 2011 demanding higher wages and improved performance-based pay. The walkout affects production at Samsung Biologics and the company said it is deploying staff to minimize disruption though some impact is expected.

# India-Tanzania trade rises to record USD growth

India–Tanzania trade rises to USD 9.02 billion, strengthening bilateral economic ties and expanding sectoral cooperation across industries.

**TANZANIA**

India–Tanzania trade has increased to USD 9.02 billion in FY26, marking a steady rise in bilateral economic engagement and reinforcing Tanzania's position as an important trade partner for India in Africa. The growth reflects expanding cooperation across multiple sectors and a shared effort to strengthen long-term economic ties.

The two countries have reaffirmed their commitment to deepen trade and investment relations, focusing on boosting private sector participation and improving the overall business environment. Discussions have highlighted the

need to expand cooperation in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, education, agriculture, shipbuilding, and regulatory frameworks to support smoother commercial exchanges.Both sides are also working on diversifying the trade basket to include higher-value goods and services, while encouraging greater industrial and technological collaboration. This is expected to create new opportunities for businesses and enhance value-added trade between the two economies.Simplifying trade procedures and improving investor facilitation, including faster visa processing for business travellers, were also key points of discussion. These measures are aimed at increasing ease of doing business and encouraging greater investment flows in both directions.

- India–Tanzania trade reaches USD 9.02B (FY26)
- Strong growth in bilateral economic ties
- Focus on pharma, healthcare, agriculture, shipbuilding
- Efforts to diversify trade and services Text
- Easier visas and improved business facilitation

The rising trade volume underscores India's broader engagement with African economies, where partnerships are increasingly moving beyond traditional commodity exchange to more diversified and strategic cooperation. Tanzania, in particular, has emerged as a key gateway for Indian businesses seeking opportunities in East Africa.

Officials from both countries expressed optimism that sustained engagement and policy support will further accelerate trade growth in the coming years, contributing to stronger economic integration and mutual development objectives.

# Pakistan economy hit by severe fuel shock crisis

**NEW DELHI**

Pakistan is facing its most serious fuel-price shock in more than 50 years, with rising global oil costs triggering wide-ranging economic risks, according to a recent report.

The surge has hit Pakistan particularly hard due to its heavy reliance on imported energy and remittances from Gulf countries. The country's already fragile balance-of-payments position is expected to come under further pressure, worsening macroeconomic instability.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the oil import bill has nearly tripled to $800 million from $300 million before the current global disruptions, wiping out recent economic gains. The spike is expected to ripple across sectors including agriculture, transport, and food supply chains, pushing up inflation and deepening the cost-of-living crisis.

Economists warn that higher fuel prices typically reduce purchasing power, slow economic activity, and increase unemployment and poverty. The situation has also intensified political pressure on the government amid rising public dissatisfaction.In response, the State Bank of Pakistan raised its policy rate to 11.5 per cent, citing heightened global energy costs, freight charges, and supply chain disruptions. However, policymakers face difficult choices between raising consumer fuel prices or increasing subsidies, both of which carry fiscal risks.International financial constraints, including conditions set by the IMF, further limit Pakistan's ability to expand subsidies, adding to fiscal stress and economic uncertainty.

**Pakistan faces severe fuel-price shock as global oil surge deepens inflation, strains imports, widens fiscal pressure, and threatens economic stability amid rising public hardship.**

# Women workforce participation sees strong growth in India

**NEW DELHI**

India has recorded significant progress in women's workforce participation and social protection coverage, the government said on Friday on the occasion of International Labour Day. Social protection coverage expanded sharply from about 19% in 2015 to over 64% in 2025, reflecting wider access to welfare schemes and formal support systems.At the same time, female labour force participation has risen from 23.3% in 2017–18 to 40% in 2025, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey. This growth highlights a structural shift, particularly in rural India, where women are increasingly engaging in consistent, income-generating work rather than occasional employment.The government noted that improved access to skills, financial inclusion, and social security has enabled more women to participate actively in the economy. Expansion of healthcare services under the Employees' State Insurance Scheme has further strengthened worker welfare. A new ESIC hospital in Budgam is expected to serve over 50,000 workers and their families.Entrepreneurship among women is also rising, especially through the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission, which has mobilised over 10 crore households into self-help groups. Initiatives like the Lakhpati Didi programme aim to help women earn sustainable incomes through better access to credit and markets.India's growing startup ecosystem, with over 2.2 lakh recognised startups, further reflects this trend, with more than one lakh ventures having at least one woman director, signalling greater gender inclusion in business leadership.

# BRICS WOMEN GROUP MEET PROMOTES WOMEN-LED GROWTH

**NEW DELHI**

Ministry of Women and Child Development convened the first preparatory meeting of the BRICS Women's Working Group under India's BRICS Presidency to advance women-led development and social transformation.The virtual meeting focused on shaping outcomes for the upcoming BRICS Women Working Group Meeting scheduled for July 6–7, 2026, and the BRICS Women Ministerial Meeting on July 8–9, 2026, which will be held in Kochi. Held under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability," discussions centred on key global priorities such as women in governance and leadership, financial and digital inclusion, entrepreneurship and skills development, and women's role in climate action, food security, and nutrition.Officials said the initiative reflects India's commitment to women-led development, recognising women as key contributors to economic growth, governance, and social progress. The meeting brought together representatives from BRICS member countries along with officials from multiple ministries, as well as partners including UN Women and industry body FICCI.Participants welcomed India's priorities under its BRICS chairship and emphasised stronger cooperation among member nations to promote inclusive growth and shared learning.India's leadership of BRICS in 2026 builds on its broader vision of promoting a people-centric approach to global development, reinforcing collaboration across emerging economies on issues of resilience, innovation, and sustainability.

## South Korea exports stay above $80 billion in April

**SEOUL**

South Korea's exports remained strong, crossing $80 billion for a second straight month in April, driven by semiconductor demand.

Outbound shipments reached $85.89 billion, up 48% year-on-year, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources. This marks the second-highest monthly export figure, just below March's record of $86.6 billion.

Imports rose 16.7% to $62.11 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of $23.77 billion. It was also the second consecutive month with a surplus exceeding $20 billion.

The surge was largely fueled by a semiconductor boom. Chip exports soared 173.5% to $31.9 billion, the highest ever for April, supported by strong global demand for AI-related semiconductors and rising memory chip prices.Petroleum product exports increased 39.9% to $5.11 billion, despite lower shipment volumes, as global oil prices climbed amid tensions in the Middle East.

# Vishvajit Sahay, Bharat Khera assume key govt roles

**NEW DELHI**

Vishvajit Sahay has taken charge as Secretary (Defence Finance) in the Ministry of Defence, bringing over three decades of experience in defence finance and public administration. A 1990 batch officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service, he previously served as Controller General of Defence Accounts and has held senior roles across departments including Science and Technology, Heavy Industries, and Information and Broadcasting.

Sahay, an alumnus of St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi, and a law graduate, has also represented India in international training programmes at institutions such as the University of Cambridge and the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies in Germany. His extensive experience spans defence procurement finance, pensions, and strategic administrative roles.In a parallel appointment, Bharat Khera has assumed charge as Secretary in the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). A 1995-batch Indian Administrative Service officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre, Khera brings more than 30 years of administrative experience at both central and state levels.Before this role, he served as Additional Secretary in the Department of Consumer Affairs and earlier held a key position in the Ministry of Defence as Joint Secretary.

## Force majeure invoked due to regional geopolitical crisis

वित्त मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
सत्यमेव जयते

**NEW DELHI**

The government has announced relief measures for businesses affected by ongoing disruptions in West Asia, allowing extension of contract deadlines without penalties to ease operational and financial stress caused by geopolitical instability.

According to the official memorandum, contractors engaged in government procurement of goods, services, and works will be eligible for deadline extensions if delays are directly linked to force majeure conditions arising from the regional crisis. The relief applies to contracts due on or after February 28, 2026, with extensions ranging from two to four months depending on case evaluation.

The move ensures that suppliers, consultants, and contractors will not face penalties for delays caused by disrupted supply chains, freight escalation, or logistical bottlenecks triggered by the situation in West Asia. Authorities clarified that such relaxations will be granted only after verifying that the contractor was not already in default prior to the disruptions.

Officials said the decision is aimed at maintaining continuity in public procurement while protecting businesses from unforeseen geopolitical risks. The relief framework also emphasizes that contractual obligations will resume once the disruption period ends, ensuring that project execution remains on track in the long term.

The measure comes amid broader government efforts to stabilize trade and industry sectors affected by the West Asia crisis, including export facilitation schemes and logistics support initiatives already in place.

Overall, the policy is expected to provide breathing space to companies struggling with rising costs, delayed shipments, and supply chain uncertainty, while safeguarding government project timelines and financial discipline.

**INDIA-AFRICA TIES**

# *India, AfDB deepen ties ahead of Africa summit*

**NEW DELHI**

India and the African Development Bank Group are expanding cooperation across key sectors as momentum builds for the India-Africa Forum Summit 2026, scheduled to be held in New Delhi.

The growing partnership focuses on digital infrastructure, industrial development, and financial collaboration, aligning with the Bank Group's strategic priorities known as the "Four Cardinal Points". These emphasise improving access to capital, strengthening financial and digital systems, and accelerating industrialisation across African economies.India, which joined the Bank Group in 1983, has consistently supported its capital increases, helping enhance its capacity to finance infrastructure, development projects, and economic recovery initiatives across member countries.

This support has also translated into greater participation by Indian companies in Bank-funded projects.Between 2020 and 2025, Indian firms secured 173 contracts worth around $760 million, accounting for 5.3 per cent of total procurement. This reflects growing private sector engagement and stronger project delivery capabilities. Economic ties between India and Africa have also expanded significantly, with bilateral trade nearing $100 billion in 2024–25. Key sectors driving this growth include infrastructure, energy, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and technology.

Digital public infrastructure has become a major pillar of cooperation. India contributed $2 million to the African Digital Financial Inclusion Facility in 2023 and signed a $6 million agreement under the India Trust Fund in 2024 to support digital payments and financial inclusion.

Healthcare and industrial development remain central, particularly efforts to boost pharmaceutical manufacturing and reduce import dependence across Africa.

# GST collections hit record Rs 2.43 lakh cr in April

**NEW DELHI**

Goods and Services Tax collections in India rose 8.7 per cent year-on-year to a record Rs 2.43 lakh cr in April, government data showed on Friday, marking the highest monthly GST mop-up since the tax system was introduced.The previous record was set in April last year at over Rs 2.23 lakh crore, indicating continued strength in economic activity and consumption.Domestic transaction revenues increased 4.3 per cent to more than Rs 1.85 lakh crore, while GST collections from imports surged 25.8 per cent to Rs 57,580 crore. The sharp rise in import-linked revenue reflects stronger external trade activity.Refunds during the month also rose 19.3 per cent to Rs 31,793 crore. After adjusting for refunds, net GST collections stood at about Rs 2.11 lakh crore, registering a 7.3 per cent increase.

Economists often view GST trends as a key indicator of both formalisation in the economy and underlying demand conditions. www

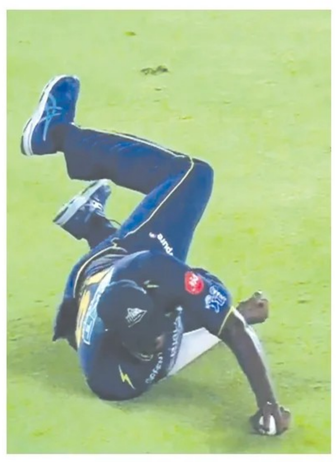
# Bishop slams controversial catch that cost RCB

Former star Ian Bishop criticized a controversial catch involving Rajat Patidar, sparking debates over umpiring standards in Ahmedabad

**AHMEDABAD**

A heated debate has erupted in the cricket world following a disputed catch during the clash between Bengaluru and Gujarat. Former star Ian Bishop claims there was plenty of proof to keep Rajat Patidar on the field, sparking fresh questions about umpiring standards.

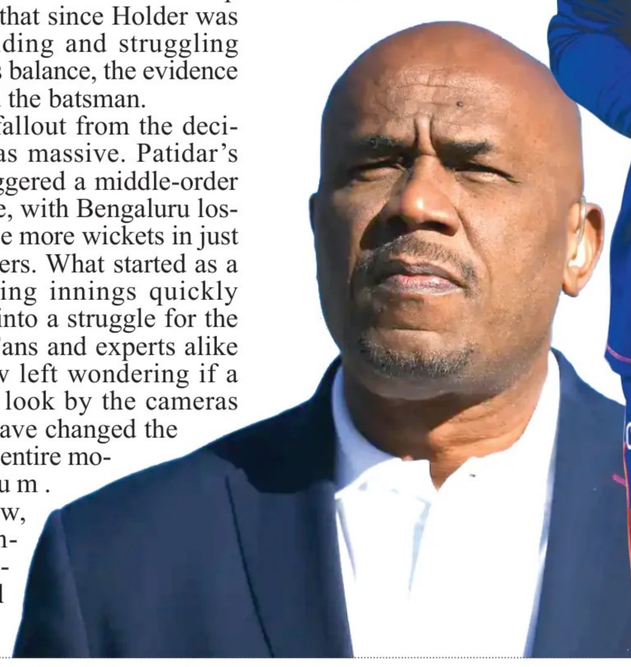
The drama unfolded in the eighth over when Patidar hit a low ball toward the boundary. Jason Holder dived for the catch, but the ball appeared to brush the grass as he slid. While the Bengaluru players immediately protested, the third umpire ruled it a fair catch. This decision left the dugout stunned and sparked a long, visible argument between Virat Kohli and the



match officials.

Bishop, speaking on the incident, noted that Holder's hand was facing the sky, meaning the ball was likely touching the turf. According to cricket rules, a fielder must have total control of both the ball and their body movement for a catch to count. Bishop argued that since Holder was still sliding and struggling with his balance, the evidence favored the batsman.

The fallout from the decision was massive. Patidar's exit triggered a middle-order collapse, with Bengaluru losing three more wickets in just four overs. What started as a promising innings quickly turned into a struggle for the team. Fans and experts alike are now left wondering if a second look by the cameras could have changed the game's entire momentum. For now, the controversial call remains the talk of the tournament.



New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner is sidelined for a month with a severe shoulder injury, missing key Tests against Ireland and England while undergoing urgent recovery

# Captain Mitchell Santner out with shoulder injury

**AUCKLAND**

New Zealand's cricket captain, Mitchell Santner, has been sidelined for at least a month following a serious shoulder injury. Scans revealed a grade three ACL injury in his left shoulder, a major blow for both the player and his national squad.

The injury happened while Santner was playing in India for the Mumbai Indians. During a high-stakes match against Chennai, the all-rounder hurt himself while fielding. He was seen in the dugout using an ice pack as his team brought in a substitute player. This was not his first struggle this season, as he had been dealing with pain in that same shoulder since early April. Despite trying to play through the discomfort in several matches, the final blow came during the game against Chennai, forcing him to fly home.

The Mumbai Indians have already moved on, signing South African spinner Keshav Maharaj to take his spot. However, the bigger concern lies with the New Zealand national team. Santner is now officially ruled out of the upcoming Test match against Ireland and the opening Test against England in June.

Doctors in Auckland have ordered a strict period of rest and physical therapy. While he hopes to return for the later matches in the England series, his fitness will be checked weekly. For now, the star spinner faces a race against time to get healthy before New Zealand's tour of the West Indies begins this July. Fans are wishing the captain a very speedy recovery.

*Gujarat star Rashid Khan urged his teammates to ignore middle-order criticism and focus on their world-class bowling strengths*

# Ignore weaknesses and play boldly, says Rashid

**AHMEDABAD**

Star spinner Rashid Khan believes focusing on a weak middle order only hurts the Gujarat Titans. While experts point to the team's struggling batters, Rashid insists that dwelling on flaws distracts the squad from winning matches and maintaining their competitive edge.

The Titans have leaned heavily on top-order stars like Shubman Gill and Jos Buttler this season. When they fail, the middle order often crumbles. However, Rashid argues that every team in the league has a hole in their lineup. Instead of worrying, he wants every player to make the most of the few balls they face. He noted that even a quick 20 runs can change a game's result.

Rashid's philosophy is simple, play to your strengths. For Gujarat, that strength is world-class bowling. By keeping the opposition to a low score, the pressure on the hitters naturally decreases. Rashid led by example in the recent win against Bengaluru, taking two wickets for just 19 runs. His disciplined bowling helped bowl the opponents out for 155, a target the Titans chased down with ease.

The Afghan leg-spinner explained that his success comes from hitting the right length consistently rather than worrying about the scoreboard. By focusing on his own job and trusting his teammates, he hopes to keep the Titans on the winning path. For Rashid, the secret to success is staying positive and ignoring the critics who only want to talk about what is going wrong.

# Ashwin warns young star after vaping drama

**NEW DELHI**

Veteran spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has spoken out regarding the recent vaping controversy involving Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag. Ashwin insists that such incidents cannot be ignored, stressing that leaders must maintain high standards of discipline in the public eye.

The trouble began during a match against Punjab when cameras caught Parag using a vaping device in the dressing room. The footage quickly went viral, leading to a 25 percent match fee fine for the young captain. Parag admitted to breaching the league's code of conduct, which forbids behavior that brings the game into disrepute.

Speaking on his YouTube channel, Ashwin acted as a mentor, calling the situation "totally avoidable." While he acknowledged that personal choices are private, he reminded Parag that his actions in a stadium are public. As a franchise leader and an inspiration to millions of young fans, Ashwin noted that Parag carries a heavy responsibility on his shoulders.

Ashwin expressed sympathy for the young player but stood firm on the need for punishment. He argued that if authorities brushed these mistakes under the carpet, no one would learn from them. The "elder brother" advice was clear, to keep personal habits in personal spaces to protect the integrity of the sport.

With the IPL season in full swing, this incident serves as a stern reminder to all athletes. In a world of constant camera coverage, there is no room for slips in professional conduct, especially for those leading a team.

# Poor batting clusters cost Bengaluru an important match

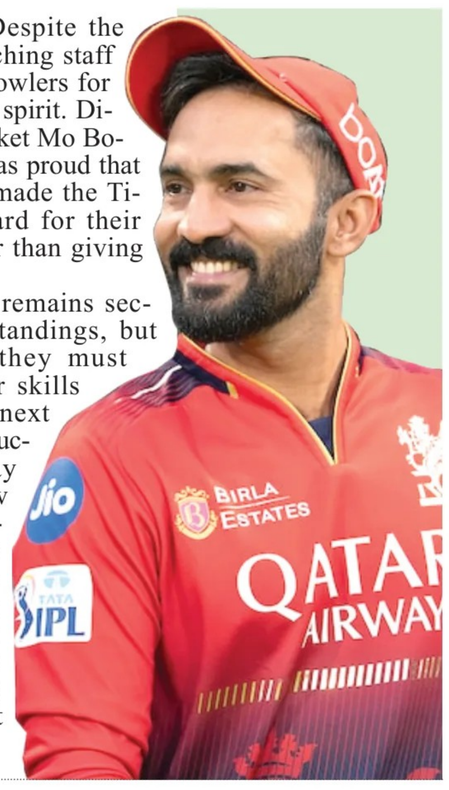
**AHMEDABAD**

Bengaluru batting coach Dinesh Karthik has blamed a sudden middle-order collapse for his team's disappointing four-wicket loss to the Gujarat Titans. Despite a brilliant start from star opener Virat Kohli, the team failed to build momentum, leading to a score that was far too low to defend.

The match began with "vintage" Kohli smashing 28 runs off just 13 balls, giving the fans exactly what they wanted. However, the excitement was short-lived. Every time Bengaluru looked ready to take control, they lost several wickets in a row. Karthik noted that losing players in "clusters" is a recipe for disaster in T20 cricket, as it stops the team from forming the long partnerships needed to set a high target.

While Devdutt Padikkal fought hard with a top score of 40, the rest of the lineup struggled. The team was eventually bowled out for 155, which Gujarat chased down easily with 25 balls remaining. Despite the loss, the coaching staff praised the bowlers for their fighting spirit. Director of Cricket Mo Bobat said he was proud that the bowlers made the Titans work hard for their victory rather than giving up.

Bengaluru remains second in the standings, but they know they must sharpen their skills before their next big game in Lucknow on May 7. After a few days off to recover, the team hopes to find their rhythm again and avoid the costly batting mistakes that hurt them.



IPL 2026

Delhi Capitals beat Rajasthan Royals by 7 wickets at Sawai Mansingh stadium in Jaipur on Friday.

# Sri Lanka youth players arrested in filming scandal

**COLOMBO**

Two Sri Lankan Under-19 cricketers were arrested for filming women at a hotel, adding to the turmoil facing the newly formed SLC Transformation Committee.

Two members of the Sri Lankan Under-19 cricket team have been arrested following shocking allegations of voyeurism at a hotel in Narahenpita. The teenagers are accused of using mobile phones to film women in their bathrooms, a scandal that has sent ripples through the nation's sporting community.

The arrests were made earlier this week after several women staying at the hotel filed official complaints. Local police are now working to determine if any of the recorded footage was shared on social media or other online platforms. After appearing at the Aluthkade Magistrate's Court, the players were released on a personal bail of approximately $1,564 each. They are scheduled to return for a second hearing on May 25.

This controversy hits at a time of total chaos for Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). The entire leadership board, including former president Shammi Silva, resigned this week under government pressure. To fix the broken system, a new "Transformation Committee" has been formed. This panel includes legendary cricketers like Kumar Sangakkara and Roshan Mahanama, alongside legal and corporate experts.

While the new committee works to rebuild the board's reputation, they now face the immediate challenge of addressing this criminal investigation. So far, SLC has not announced specific disciplinary actions against the two youth players. However, with legends like Sangakkara now at the helm, fans are expecting a firm response to ensure that such behavior is never tolerated in the gentleman's game again.

# Seven year deal to boost Jharkhand cricket

**NOIDA**

The Jharkhand State Cricket Association (JSCA) has officially partnered with SJ Uplift to launch and develop the Jharkhand T20 Cricket League. This ambitious seven-year agreement aims to transform local cricket into a professional powerhouse, starting with an inaugural season featuring six competitive franchises.

Under this new mandate, SJ Uplift will take full control of the league's operations and commercial growth. Their responsibilities include finding sponsors, securing media rights, and building a strong brand for the tournament. The goal is to create a platform that not only showcases local talent but also stays financially healthy for years to come.

JSCA President Ajay Nath Shahdeo expressed his excitement about the deal, noting that the association wanted a partner with a proven track record. "We are pleased to build a professionally structured league," he said. He believes this partnership aligns perfectly with the vision of providing a sustainable and well-organized stage for cricketers across the state.

SJ Uplift is no stranger to sports management, having previously successfully launched the Uttar Pradesh Kabaddi League.

# Three stars named icons for Mumbai league

**MUMBAI**

The Mumbai Cricket Association has officially named Sayali Satghare, Saima Thakor, and Humaira Kazi as "Icon Players" for the first-ever T20 Mumbai Women's League. This major announcement marks a historic step forward for women's cricket in the city as teams begin to take shape for the upcoming season.

Sayali Satghare will lead the charge for the SoBo Mumbai Falcons, while Saima Thakor joins the Thane Sky Risers and Humaira Kazi signs with the Aakash Tigers. Both Sayali and Saima bring valuable international experience from their time with the Indian national team. Humaira is also highly regarded as a top domestic player with experience in the India A squad.

The league is creating massive excitement, with over 2,400 players including 363 women registering for the official auction taking place this Saturday.

Each women's team will select a squad of up to 18 players to ensure the competition remains fierce and balanced.

MCA President Ajinkya Naik stated that these icons will provide the leadership needed to inspire the next generation of female athletes. He believes the league will serve as a long-term platform to find and grow local talent.

League Chairman Rajdip Gupta added that these star players are the foundation for building strong team identities.

With the auction just a day away, the city is buzzing with anticipation as Mumbai prepares to showcase its incredible depth of cricketing talent on a brand-new professional stage.

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